

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MAKE NEW PLANS / MICROBIOME BREAKTHROUGHS

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY

MARCH 2026



## TIGER TALES

*Mascots across generations reveal their secrets*



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*An editorially independent magazine by alumni for alumni since 1900*



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Former mascots Emily Henkelman '04 and Tom Culp '69 are back in the game at Jadwin Gym and joined by a mascot whose identity is being protected.

*Photograph by Sameer A. Khan h'21/Fotobuddy.*

MATT FLURMAN

## The Stars Align at Many Minds, Many Stripes

Princeton designates its graduate classes with stars—as in \*25, for example—so you might say that the stars aligned at the 2025 Many Minds, Many Stripes conference celebrating our graduate alumni.

The October conference coincided with this year's Nobel Prize announcements, often an exciting time on the Princeton campus. When Princeton graduate alumna Mary Brunkow \*91 received the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, I knew we were in for a spectacular celebration.

Brunkow, whose Princeton Ph.D. is in molecular biology, was recognized for “groundbreaking discoveries concerning *peripheral immune tolerance* that prevents the immune system from harming the body.” She was our eighteenth graduate alum to receive a Nobel Prize.

Her dazzling achievement launched the Many Minds, Many Stripes conference with a burst of enthusiastic pride as alumni returned and reconnected.

Over 900 graduate alumni and guests attended the three-day conference, representing eight decades of Princetonians. For about half of the alumni, it was their first time attending an alumni conference hosted by the University, and for some it was their first time returning to campus since graduating.

Throughout the conference, I spoke with graduate alumni who were struck by the transformation of our physical campus and the improvements in the graduate student experience.

As in the past, Princeton's outstanding academic programs remain the core of graduate education. Stipend increases, including dramatic improvements in 2001 and again in 2022, have given graduate students more freedom not only to pursue and complete their degrees, but also to embrace more of what our institution has to offer.

Beyond increased financial support, the University and Graduate School have for the past 15 years been intentionally cultivating opportunities for our graduate student body to engage more fully in campus life.

Among their many extracurricular engagements, graduate students now sing in some of Princeton's cappella groups and participate in student performing arts and dance organizations. They compete in our campus intramural sports leagues and serve as fitness instructors in the new Class of 1986 Fitness & Wellness Center, the renovated Dillon Gymnasium, and the new Wilkinson Fitness Center on the Meadows Campus.

Perhaps most strikingly, graduate students today have a variety of campus housing options, including the new Meadows housing development south of Lake Carnegie. Together these communities allow over 70% of graduate students to live on campus and enjoy a wide range of amenities during their first five years at Princeton.

Students can choose a home that suits their stage of life, including townhouses and apartments that support

growing families. These neighborhoods help to integrate graduate students into University life and enhance their student experience.

I spent an evening with some of our first-year graduate students later in the fall when Dean of the Graduate School Rod Priestley hosted a meet-and-greet at his home near the Graduate College. Dean Priestley asked the students to describe what had impressed them in their first few weeks at Princeton. They spoke about mentorship they had received, interdisciplinary collaborations they cherished, and a community that embraced them warmly.

I left the conference and the meet-and-greet grateful for the efforts of our deans, faculty, and staff to attract top scholars to the Graduate School and inspired by the ways our students have participated energetically in campus life and made Princeton their own.

As we commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Princeton Graduate School, I want to thank the graduate alumni—the School's stars—for being such effective ambassadors for Princeton. They are fulfilling Princeton's mission of service to humanity in academia, industry, and nonprofit institutions, and through public service. On campus and in our regional alumni associations, they give back to Princeton by sharing their expertise on advisory councils, serving on committees and working groups, and contributing to our Annual Giving campaigns.

I look forward to sporting my new Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni (APGA) jacket at Reunions this May, and I hope to see many of our graduate alumni in orange and black as we celebrate 125 years of excellence.




APGA President Laurence Latimer \*01 surprises me onstage during the Many Minds, Many Stripes conference with a new APGA Reunions jacket. Photo by Sameer A. Khan/Fotobuddy

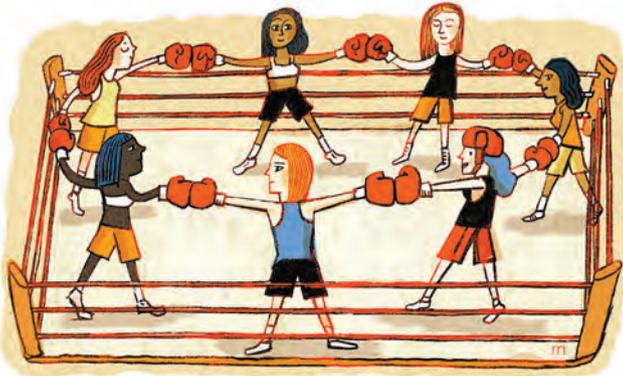


# INBOX

YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE LATEST ISSUES

## HIGH-FIVES FOR BOXING

Big cheers and kudos to Grace Shin '28 and others for reviving Princeton's Boxing Club (Student Dispatch, January issue) and for building community around boxing! When I was a freshman at a different university, I helped start the first women's boxing club, still



going strong today. Our nightly practices involving mile-long runs, footwork, boxing drills, and conditioning drew our tiny band of women together, leaving us stronger in and out of the ring. I still reflect fondly on the skills

and friendships I made then and note with pride how well they have served me over the decades, including some surprising ways! I'm high-fiving you from here!

**KELLY MCGANNON '06**  
*Kirkland, Wash.*

## SMALL-TOWN LIVING

Regarding alumni in small towns ("Small Town Wonderers," January issue): After medical school, anesthesiology residency, and two years in the U.S. Public Health Service, we chose to buy a 15-acre family farm from my grandparents' estate and raise our three children while I practiced in the nearby urban center of the state capital. The kids all grew up learning responsibilities, enjoying freedom and independence. When I retired from medicine at age 68, I still had productive activities all year round at the farm and in the local community.

I served many years on planning and zoning boards, and it is satisfying to see the preservation my neighbors and I have accomplished. Our biggest achievement was the merging of our former village and adjoining township to maintain local control and avoid creeping

annexation from nearby urban entities. We have been actively involved in our state farmland preservation movement and are grateful for the privilege of stewardship of our 217-acre farm.

**JOHN E. HOHMANN '63**  
*Pataskala, Ohio*

I would add my vote for living in a small community and making your own path: I grew up in a farm community in the Hudson Valley and worked on my uncle's farm all the way from high school through grad school (Wharton MBA '78). See if you can find a "farm kid" there now.

The best thing (there were many) about Philly was that I met my future wife. My first job was as a high-end national insurance broker up in Westchester, New York. After two years in white collar jobs, we moved west (Pacific Northwest/Canada) where we spent over 20 years

moving around, building and renovating golf courses, many of them in smaller rural communities. I went back to Cornell and Penn State for ag and turf education, became an expert heavy equipment operator, and settled near Spokane in the early 1990s after we built a course here.

We bought an original homestead property — the Funny Farm — totally restored it, added on, rehabbed the barn, built a shop, and added more acreage and outbuildings. I moved into working with 3D modeling, GIS, and data visualization — all from home — doing rewarding work with nonprofits and educators on a wide variety of public awareness projects.

Fifty years after Princeton, I'm still willing and able to do farm chores.

**RON HALL '76**  
*Cheney, Wash.*

Here in southwestern South Dakota, life can be rather different than the cliches and euphemisms used to describe, and to avoid describing, "rural" America. Amid the beauty of the Black Hills, one need not drive too far to witness the hollowing out of our country at the Homestake gold mine, the Powder River Basin coal mines, and the claims being made for future lithium and gold mining. Nor need one live here too long to experience a different hollowing out of our country at times: the poor education that fails to support families, the weakening institutional and social fabric that allows deleterious isolation and its supporting ideologies to thrive, and the ravages of suicide, among other difficult problems.

Yet, because our issues have been papered over by a thriving tourism industry and retirees finding a few acres of land to live on, and because this relative prosperity stands in marked contrast to the adjacent Pine Ridge Reservation, even I would hesitate to describe mine as a "rural" experience. Imagine my surprise to see suburbs of major cities like Philadelphia described

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INBOX

as “rural”! Although I am glad to see some coverage of rural America in PAW, the sad reality is that Princeton has barely started to fulfill its commitment of working “in the nation’s service” in our rural places.

**RAPHAEL MURILLO '12**

*Custer, S.D.*



KWANZA JONES '93 AND JOSÉ E. FELICIANO '94

**DREAMING BIG**

There was a huge smile on my face as I read about Kwanza Jones '93 and José E. Feliciano '94, the journeys they have traveled so far, and the incredible contributions they have made to make this world a better place (“The King and Queen of Energy,” January issue). I am also thankful for Mark Bernstein '83’s honesty in reporting the issues they encountered early on when offering donations to the University, and this remarkable outcome. I am going to remember Kwanza’s mottos — inspiring! I agree with her: We have to keep dreaming big.

**SARAH GLADSTONE '93**

*Prairie Village, Kan.*

Kwanza Jones '93 and José E. Feliciano '94 are truly wonderful human beings and, with their tremendous finance, also joined the many alums whose philanthropy has historically set Princeton apart with high esteem and welcoming invitation. Maybe it is more than coincidental that the 17-letter fragment, “... finance, also joined ...” matches, letter for letter, the names “Jones and Feliciano.”

**DAVID L. EVANS \*66**

*Cambridge, Mass.*

**AUDITING CLASSES**

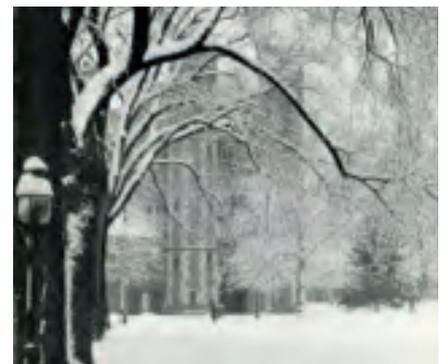
What a dream come true auditing classes must be (On the Campus, January issue)! In fact, before the pandemic I literally had a recurrent dream of being back on campus, overjoyed to be taking more courses. That dream also came true when Princeton started offering streaming and hybrid Princeton events, since 2020.

My wife, Elisabeth \*70, and I attended Princeton’s first on-campus Alumni College in 1976. It was on the American Revolution. For the past 10 years, we’ve spent a week every summer at Washington and Lee University, participating in their excellent series of Alumni Colleges.

How about Princeton reviving its own Alumni Colleges?

**RICHARD M. WAUGAMAN '70**

*Rockville, Md.*



PRINCETON'S CAMPUS, JANUARY 1982

**SNOW STORIES**

As you requested in the January From the Archives column, here’s a snow story:

During the fall of my first year as an undergraduate, I needed new glasses. I went to a small shop on or near Nassau Street and ordered a pair of frameless spectacles that would fit my new image better than the heavy tortoise shells I’d worn in high school (it was, after all, 1969).

The ophthalmologist dilated my eyes for the vision test. Hand on my brow, I made my way back to my suite in 1901 Hall without too much trouble, as the day was cloudy. Once there, I took a nap, because any other activity felt too challenging to my dilated eyes.

Unfortunately, during my nap a heavy snowstorm hit. When I awoke, a walk

to Commons through a blinding white campus was out of the question. I only made it to supper by walking with eyes tightly closed, a hand on the shoulder of one of my roommates.

**DANIEL ERDMAN '73**  
*Lancaster, Pa.*

I had finished the graveyard shift at WPRB, which was located in the basement of Holder Hall and had no windows. When I emerged at 6 a.m. that Sunday morning, I was delighted to discover that it had snowed heavily overnight. I could see the footprints that the classical jock had left in the snow on her way in to the station, but there were no others. It was as quiet as I had ever heard the campus — so early on a Sunday morning, plus the hush that a blanket of snow brings. I felt like the only person in the world as I walked back to my dorm room — this fresh, untrammelled world. It was the most beautiful sight I had ever seen.

**ANDREW LOCHART '86**  
*Hillsborough, Calif.*

**YOUR PERSPECTIVE**

Let us know what you think

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COURTESY OF MAGGIE HOFFMAN '04; ZACHARY BLACKMAN; SAMEER A. KHAN '21 / FOTOBUFFY



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**PAWCAST**  
**Dinnertime**

**Maggie Hoffman '04** has the answer to that age-old question: What's for dinner? In her podcast and Substack, titled "The Dinner Plan," she offers recipes, cookbook recommendations, and other tips, like how to recover from kitchen burnout. On the latest PAWcast, she discusses her journey and helps us all figure out what to put on the table tonight.

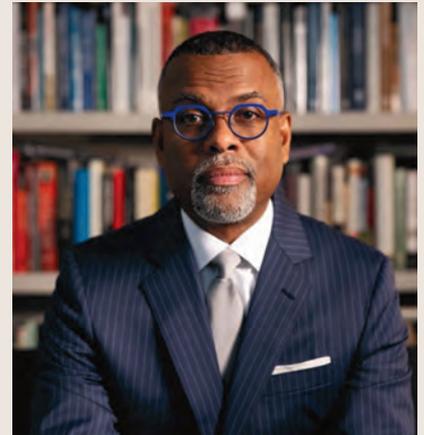


MAGGIE HOFFMAN '04



**TIGER TRAVELS**  
**Cross-Country Skiing**

In the winter of 2021, as he worked on his MFA at the University of Nevada, Reno, **Harrison Blackman '17** asked: Could cross-country skiing at nearby Lake Tahoe be a fun, affordable, form of exercise for a former cross-country runner? The answer turned out to be an emphatic YES, and in this guide for PAW's Tiger Travels he outlines how you can do it, too.



**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**  
**Eddie Glaude Jr. '97**

For the 100th anniversary of Negro History Week, which eventually evolved into Black History Month, PAW spoke with **Eddie S. Glaude Jr. '97**, professor of African American studies, about his upcoming book on race in America and about understanding Black history today. "In this moment, we don't clutch our pearls," Glaude said, "we tell our story and we stand in it, full chested."

**SPORTS**  
**Basketball Madness**

Soon we will be in the grip of basketball tournament season, and PAW plans to cover the Tigers every step of the way — starting with **Ivy Madness**. The Ivy League men's and women's tournaments will tip off March 13 in Ithaca, New York. Read our coverage at paw.princeton.edu/latest-news/sports.





Willem de Kooning, *Black Friday*, 1948. Princeton University Art Museum. Gift of H. Gates Lloyd, Class of 1923, and Mrs. Lloyd in honor of the Class of 1923. © 2026 The Willem de Kooning Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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# ON THE CAMPUS

NEWS, SPORTS, AND STUDENT LIFE



## CENTURY MARK

*Cecelia B. Hodges Drewry, a former assistant dean of the college, celebrated her 100th birthday at Prospect House in January with Princeton friends from both town and gown.*

SAMEER A. KHAN P/21 / FOTOBUDDY



## STUDENT LIFE

# Facing Barriers, International Students Make New Plans

BY CECILE MCWILLIAMS '26

*Editor's note: The international students interviewed for this article requested anonymity because they feared that speaking publicly could jeopardize their visa status. Each is identified by first initial and class year.*

**I**N THE SUMMER OF 2022, S. '26 took a taxi from Damascus to Beirut for her visa interview. The American Embassy in Syria had been closed since 2012, shortly after the country's civil war broke out. After receiving her acceptance to Princeton, S. withheld excitement, worried her visa case would get rejected or delayed. To her surprise, the official approved her application immediately.

Shortly after her arrival in the U.S., S.'s visa expired. The standard length for student visas to the U.S. varies by country, and for Syria, the norm is just three months. Without a valid visa, S.'s status in the

country remains legal until she gets her degree. But this security comes with a catch: She could not leave the country without the risk of not getting back in. Before January, she would have had to reapply for a visa, and since then, travel to the U.S. for Syrian nationals has been banned.

Now a senior, S. longs to see her family. As she has progressed with her degree and worked internships in the U.S., her brothers have grown up without her. "When I left, my brothers were, like, shorter than me," she told PAW. "Now I almost don't even recognize them."

Hoping to reunite with her relatives at graduation, S. started helping them apply for visas, but when the Trump administration imposed the travel ban from Syria, S. scrambled to figure out what it meant. "Will my family be able to come see me?" she recalls wondering. "Probably not at this point."

The uncertainty she feels is widespread. Over the past year, President Donald Trump's administration has targeted international students in a series of restrictions, citing concerns about national security. Fear has spread among international students at Princeton, where 13% of undergraduates — and 44% of grad students in 2024-25 — come from abroad. "This is not the safe haven that it was supposed to be," B. '27, a Princeton student from Latin America, told PAW.

**For decades, the U.S. has been a global leader in attracting talent from abroad.** Last school year, there were close to 1.2 million international students in the U.S., the highest number of any country on record, according to a report from the Institute of International Education. In the last decade, though, the percentage of international students around the globe coming to the U.S. has been declining, from 20% in 2013-14 to 16% in 2023-24, according to the Migration Policy Institute.

The Trump administration's restrictions on travel, visa issuance, and speech are likely to damage the country's reputation among international students even more.

On his first day back in office, Trump issued an executive order demanding increased vetting of student visa applicants. Soon after, another executive order threatened to deport students and faculty involved in protests that the administration deemed antisemitic. Then, the U.S. government revoked thousands of student visas and altered the status of many in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a digital database tracking international students, according to *Inside Higher Ed*. Weeks later, facing lawsuits, the administration reversed the changes in SEVIS.

In defense of these restrictions, the Trump administration has underscored its commitment to national security. "Whether they be [a] student or if you're a tourist who needs a visa, or whoever you are, we're going to be looking at you," said then-spokesperson Tammy Bruce at a press conference in May, responding

to a question about student visas. “Every nation should take seriously — and does — who’s coming in.”

Meanwhile, advocates see international students as a boon, and not a threat, to U.S. interests. “When international students succeed in America, we all win,” said Jill Welch, executive director of U.S. for Success, a multi-sector coalition that supports U.S. competitiveness through attracting international students.

The Trump administration’s visa revocations affected a fraction of the international students in the U.S., but they caused widespread fear. To protect their status, international students at Princeton who spoke with PAW said they cleansed their phones of possible red flags, wiping chat histories, unfollowing social media accounts, and even deactivating their social accounts.

Students also began to tread cautiously in politics. Several described staying far away from campus protests to avoid appearing in photos or videos. The effect was one of “total silencing,” said one student.

M. ’27, an international student from Europe, attended poetry readings in support of Palestine and occasionally manned the spring 2024 encampment protesting the war in Gaza. But after his parents expressed concern over his legal status in the U.S., M., a politics major, opted out of political expression. “To some extent I decided to prioritize my safety,” he told PAW. “Even though, like, it goes a little bit against my morals.”

In May, the Trump administration blocked Harvard from enrolling new international students. (A federal judge later ruled against the measure.) B., a rising junior at the time, was on a lunch break at his internship when he saw the news. Immediately, he feared Princeton would be next. Though the proposed restrictions would only affect prospective students, B. worried about his ability to finish his degree. “I don’t know if I just wasted, like, two years of my life,” he recalls telling his mother on the phone.

B. returned to campus last fall, but not without anxiety. For several weeks,

## “I don’t think I’m exaggerating if I say that almost everyone has, at the very least, reconsidered their future plans and thoughts on staying in the U.S.”

— M. ’26

International student from Spain

he avoided venturing off campus, fearing law enforcement. Having observed the way the administration has targeted international students and Hispanic migrants, B. said he feels especially scrutinized. “It’s like I’m in a panopticon,” he told PAW. He noted how unfair this feels. “We pay taxes. We don’t break laws,” he said. “It just feels like no one wants us around.”

As a freshman, B. had ambitions to apply to law school in the U.S. He no longer wants this — and he’s not alone.

“I don’t think I’m exaggerating if I say that almost everyone has, at the very least, reconsidered their future plans and thoughts on staying in the U.S.,” M. ’26, who is from Spain, told PAW over text. Though his request to OPT, the program authorizing international students to work in the country, has been approved, he suspects that employers are less inclined than before to hire international graduates.

M. said daily life distracts from the precarity international students feel. But occasional reminders resurface his concerns — emails from the Davis International Center or news headlines, for example. M. and several other students who spoke to PAW described the cumulative feeling as one of culpability. “That’s the craziest feeling,” he said. “The feeling is that you’ve done something wrong.”

**In addition to this uncertainty,** concrete restrictions loom. In August, the Trump administration proposed to end “Duration of Status,” which allows students to switch programs, transfer schools, or take time off without

reapplying for a visa.

“In some ways, it doesn’t sound unreasonable,” said Dan Berger, a lawyer and immigration scholar. But the change, which would require students to go through additional steps to extend the length of their visas, comes with a cost. “When you’re talking about adding in millions of applications with a smaller workforce, and a large backlog, and a policy of extreme vetting,” Berger said, “it’s a recipe for things not getting done in time.”

The proposed change would make it harder for students who need more than four years to complete their program of study. It would also make it harder for them to work in the U.S. after graduation. The changes affecting international students will likely make campuses look different. Workplaces too.

For many, the U.S. has long signaled safety and the possibility of upward mobility. It is home to excellent universities and a competitive job market. But international students have always had other opportunities beyond an American education. As life gets harder for international students in the U.S., they might just start to take them.

“As an international student, you sort of just, like, have to watch helplessly,” said M. ’28, who came to Princeton from Australia. Still, he acknowledged that, as an Australian, he is in a more stable position than many international students. “It really matters where you’re from,” he said.

Indeed, there are as many international student experiences as there are international students. Those from countries that issue short-term visas face unique challenges.

For P. ’29, a freshman from Cambodia, it was a feat to even get a visa. At the time she applied, operations at the American Embassy in Phnom Penh had slowed. A week after her interview, the Trump administration paused all student visa interviews as it planned new screening processes. Interviews resumed in June. Still, P. fears leaving the U.S. and renewing her visa, which was only valid for three months. “I really want to visit family,” she told PAW. “But I’m scared.” ■



ELIZABETH TSURKOV

## GRADUATE SCHOOL

# Elizabeth Tsurkov Welcomed Back at Reception in D.C.

BY JULIE BONETTE

**A** **DORNED WITH A GIFTED** “Back by Popular Demand” sash, Princeton Ph.D. student Elizabeth Tsurkov celebrated her freedom after 903 days in captivity at a reception in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 28, making her first trip back to the United States since her release in September. She was surrounded by family and friends at the headquarters of Global Reach, along with “a room full of wonderful angels of strangers who worked on my behalf,” she told the crowd of about 40.

During his brief remarks, Adam Boehler, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, said he and his team “are like President Trump’s freedom fighters. ... We work really hard and we don’t see our families, but we get people out.”

During her roughly two-week stay in the nation’s capital, Tsurkov planned to meet with politicians, members of the media, and others who helped free her from Kataib Hezbollah, the Shiite militia group that kidnapped her in March 2023 in Iraq, where she was conducting research for her approved dissertation topic. She met with Sen. Ted Cruz ’92, R-Texas, Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., and others in Congress. She was also

meeting with organizations that worked to secure her release, such as Global Reach, a nonprofit dedicated to returning hostages that worked closely with the Tsurkov family throughout the ordeal. Global Reach, in addition to holding the reception, hosted Tsurkov and her three siblings during their time in Washington.

At the reception, Sebastian Gorka, deputy assistant to the president and senior director of counterterrorism, credited the release of Tsurkov and 90 other hostages who have been returned to America in the last year to President Donald Trump. “It may have been the Israelis or the Russians who should have brought you out and didn’t, but you are home now,” Gorka said. “Welcome home.”

“I wouldn’t have survived this for

**“I feel that it’s very important to share them, you know, given the price I paid to gain them.”**

— ELIZABETH TSURKOV

On planning to write articles to share insights she learned while she was in captivity

much longer,” said Tsurkov, a dual Israeli-Russian citizen, expressing her gratitude for “American power.”

**The morning of the event, Tsurkov** and her sister, Emma, who was vocal in campaigning on her sister’s behalf, spent more than an hour answering reporters’ questions.

Emma Tsurkov said she felt a change once President Trump took office. She immediately got in contact with Boehler, who “was so on it. It was so clear that he did not come to play games and have 17 different layers of debates on whether my sister’s name can even be mentioned” to Iraqi leaders.

Elizabeth Tsurkov said she will soon return to Israel, where she is undergoing physical therapy, therapy, and necessary medical procedures due to the vicious torture she endured.

She is continuing to work on her Princeton dissertation from afar.

“I’m in contact with my professors, with my committee,” she said. “I’ve recently sent them a draft of a chapter in my dissertation. So, I’m very determined to get that done.”

She is also planning to write articles to share insights she learned while she was in captivity. “I feel that it’s very important to share them, you know, given the price I paid to gain them.”

She wants to settle back in the United States once she can again live independently, but she’s not sure if that means returning to Princeton.

“Since I’m just writing the dissertation, I don’t need to be physically there. Of course, I do intend to visit campus. I have friends there,” Tsurkov said, but she also feels that “Princeton can be somewhat of an isolating experience. Everyone is holed up in their own home or office just working on their Ph.D., so that may be not the best environment for me.”

Tsurkov reflected that all she endured made her realize what she had previously taken for granted, like “the sun, its warmth on my skin, the ability to choose what I eat, the ability to log online, follow the news” and, of course, to be with loved ones.

“I’m happy to be free. I’m happy to be alive.” **P**

ADMINISTRATION

# Eisgruber Warns University Community of Additional Cuts

**I**N HIS 2026 STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY letter, President Christopher Eisgruber '83 warned the community that Princeton is expecting to make further budgetary and operational changes over the coming months and for the next few years in anticipation of a decline in long-term endowment returns. University departments have already cut 5% to 7% of their budgets since last spring, the Feb. 2 letter said.

Two days later, an email to University employees announced that the usual merit raises of varying amounts based on performance will be replaced this year with raises of 1%, except for some groups getting 0%.

The recent completion of new or renovated buildings such as the Princeton

University Art Museum, Briger Hall, the Frist Health Center, and the Class of 1986 Fitness and Wellness Center have capped a period of "historic growth" for Princeton that was laid out in a 2016 strategic framework document by the Board of Trustees, Eisgruber wrote. Construction and expansion of the undergraduate class was buoyed by the Venture Forward campaign, which raised "fundraising totals ... higher than any previous Princeton campaign."

Despite this, Eisgruber noted that "long-term rates of return are steadily declining across university endowments," including at Princeton over the last three fiscal years, which has led the administration to assume an 8% return going forward,

rather than a 10.2% return as was anticipated three years ago. That 2.2% difference, over 10 years, "would amount to a cut of more than \$11 billion — a reduction that exceeds the University's last two capital campaigns combined."

In October, the University's endowment reported an 11% return on investments for the 2025 fiscal year, its best performance in four years. That put the endowment at \$36.4 billion.

Eisgruber said he expects the downward trend in endowment returns to continue as it "reflect[s] changing market fundamentals, not specific investment choices."

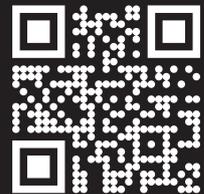
This means the University will be more reliant than ever upon philanthropy and is likely to require "more targeted, and in some cases deeper, reductions over a multiyear period," according to the letter. This may mean eliminating or reducing programs, as the University has to "make some hard budgetary choices in the months and years to come." ■ By J.B.



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## STUDENT DISPATCH

# Facing a Job Market Shaped by AI, Seniors Reevaluate Their Paths

BY BAHIA KAZEMIPOUR '26



**F**OUR YEARS AGO, when the Class of 2026 attended freshman orientation, every talk seemed to circle the same question: “What does a Princeton student do?” The answers would take the form of thousands of divergent paths, shaped by choices like what we would study, which communities we would join, and how we might create a Princeton experience uniquely our own. No one mentioned — at least not yet — artificial intelligence, except obliquely, in reminders about academic integrity policies and professors’ quiet uncertainty about how it would reshape the classroom.

Now, as seniors ponder a new question — “What does a Princeton student *go on to do*?” — the influence of AI on the job market and long-term career plans has become impossible to ignore, even in popular fields that regularly send recruiters to campus.

Of the roughly 1,200 Class of 2024

graduates who responded to the Center for Career Development’s survey of first destinations after graduation, 16% chose jobs in finance. For many, however, this choice reflects precaution rather than aspiration. Four of the 15 students who spoke with PAW for this story described entering the finance recruiting pipeline despite having little interest in the work itself. As one student put it, the decision felt less like a commitment than a contingency plan: With recruiting timelines beginning as early as freshman year, opting out early can feel like forfeiting the option entirely.

The sense of stability once underpinning these early decisions has begun to erode, as some companies have opted for AI-driven productivity gains, rather than hiring. Students said that entry-level roles in finance, consulting, and computer science feel increasingly uncertain. Several pointed to shrinking analyst classes, tighter return offers, and the replacement of routine tasks with automated tools as evidence that junior roles are becoming more precarious.

Students are responding to this uncertainty in markedly different ways. Some are applying to more of these increasingly scarce entry-level roles. One student, a School of Public and International Affairs major who requested anonymity because they are

still searching for a job, explained that they “bulk applied” to about 40 finance and venture capital jobs, “just submitting one after another, changing the cover letter slightly for each.” The motivating force, they noted, was not interest but panic.

Even those who have already secured offers feel the instability. Another senior, who asked to remain anonymous, accepted a full-time position at JPMorgan but said that “AI could still take over my job as a junior banker,” noting that the work he does could be used to train AI.

At the same time, others are energized by the so-called “AI revolution,” viewing it as an opportunity to lean into what they believe is irreplaceable about their own ways of thinking and being. Devan Morey '26, a SPIA major planning to pursue a career in law, explained that her response to AI has been to increasingly “exercise personal ways of thinking that can’t be outsourced to an algorithm — creative muscles, interpersonal nuance, and empathetic problem solving.”

Daniel Pries '26 echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that human lived experience is “something that AI can never really replicate.” Though he majors in operations research and financial engineering and plans to pursue a career in technology, Pries said his passions lie in music and in forging meaningful human connection.

“As AI becomes more prominent, humans will start to see human things — crafted, written, molded, discussed — as more genuine and have a greater appreciation for what’s human,” Pries said. “There’s a certain level of raw expression that can’t really be replaced by AI.”

Perhaps the more hopeful response to AI, then, is not resistance but recalibration. AI may replace redundancy, automate patterns, and optimize workflows, but it cannot replace thoughtful writing, artistic risk, or the authenticity of lived experience. And the four years spent answering “What does a Princeton student do?” — through experimentation, failure, and formation — help students discover what cannot be automated. That discovery, more than any job pipeline or technical skill, ultimately shapes not just what a Princeton student does, but what they can go on to become. ■



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REV. THERESA S. THAMES

PASTORAL CARE

# Religious Life Office Supports Student Mental Health

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**M**ICHELLE THURBER '26'S first real connection with the Office of Religious Life (ORL) came after her friend Lauren Blackburn '26 died by suicide in the spring of 2025. Thurber and her friends attended Blackburn's memorial service, where she spoke about him. Afterward, Matt Weiner, an associate dean of religious life who practices Buddhism, approached her, hugged her, and encouraged her to reach out.

She emailed him, and two days later, they met up. Thurber said they spoke for an hour and a half, and she continued meeting with him every day for the next week. She had been interested in Buddhism and meditation during her time at Princeton, but the conversations with Weiner, she said, were not explicitly religious; instead, they gave her a space to speak through her emotions, unfiltered. Weiner related some of her experiences to Buddhist teachings. Over time, he became a mentor and a friend.

"I think especially at times at Princeton, when things were difficult,

that was one of the things that I turned to," she said. During the summer, she converted to Christianity but expressed her continued appreciation of Buddhism and the intermingling of religious traditions — as well as a desire to give back to the ORL. She now serves as the office's student correspondent, covering events across faith traditions and connecting with chaplains throughout the office.

As student mental health needs increase at Princeton, the ORL has emerged as a key, and often overlooked, source of support. Through pastoral care, ORL chaplains provide students with a place to share their feelings, process grief, and reflect on their experiences, regardless of their religious identity. Chaplains aim to complement traditional mental health services, not replace them, and often serve as a first point of contact.

**PAW spoke with five ORL chaplains** who provide holistic emotional and spiritual support, though each approaches it differently. They

emphasized that a large percentage of the students they work with do not identify as religious, and they encourage students across identities and the spiritual spectrum to visit them.

For Vineet Chander, assistant dean for Hindu life, accompanying students spiritually in times of crisis or distress, but also in times of celebration, is central to his role and "a defining feature of a pastoral approach to mental health."

The Rev. Theresa S. Thames, dean of religious life, emphasized the importance of paying attention to the whole body, not just the physical body, but also our environments and our communities. "I really am thankful that students trust us with their whole lives," she said. Students come to her with concerns ranging from perfectionism to issues with family to the state of the world.

Chaplains work closely with Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS), and the two groups often meet with the same students. The Rev. Brittany Longsdorf, associate dean of religious life and of the chapel, explained



LONGSDORF

that the ORL tries to complement CPS in lots of grief spaces. "It's really a part of almost all of our religious training and credentialing, to understand grief and how to walk with people in grief and not be afraid of it," she said. Thames added that chaplains often invite students to slow down through meditation, prayer, or breathing practices.

Longsdorf said that as mental health needs have increased across higher education, universities have tried to "staff up" only to realize no amount of staff can meet all of the community's needs.

While there is often a long wait time for a CPS appointment, CPS is designed as a short-term resource that typically connects students with outside providers. Students generally receive an initial consultation within three days or fewer, after which they may be referred

to an outside provider or someone internally within CPS. For nonurgent concerns, students can also attend drop-in sessions with certain counselors during designated 30-minute time slots.

“We by no means are looking to sort of substitute for or replace or rival or be in competition with those kinds of therapeutic interventions,” Chander said. He added that chaplains often walk students over to CPS and wait with them. Imam Khalil Abdullah, the assistant dean for Muslim life, emphasized the recent addition of multiple Muslim counselors within CPS.

Longsdorf said that when she thinks about spiritual wellness, she thinks of building and empowering communities. For her, pastoral care looks like offering a cup of tea, lighting a candle, and emphasizing confidentiality in her space. Chaplains are confidential resources and are not mandated reporters.

Abdullah said he prioritizes meeting students not just in his office but wherever around campus is most comfortable for them. He emphasized that his work is not always solution-oriented, but about learning how to embrace the challenges that come with being a Princeton student.

“Pastoral care is about relationships. It’s about consistency, it’s about vulnerability, and that can only happen with trust,” he said, often built over shared food and conversation.

Beyond pastoral care, the ORL offers a variety of programming, including study circles, meditations, prayers, service opportunities, concerts, dinners, religious celebrations, lectures, and Hour of Power, a midweek worship service that welcomes the entire Princeton community.

Thurber described the support the ORL provides as distinct from other institutional resources.

“That felt a lot more like a friend or a family member who was genuinely just trying to keep you together,” she said. “They all really care about getting to know you as a person beyond academics.” 

# Taplin Environmental Lecture



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CENTER ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

# Princeton Serves Up Bite-Size STEM Events

BY JULIE BONETTE

**A SUGARY SWEET YET SUBTLY** smoky smell evoking Christmas markets and happy campfires filled the Yeh demo kitchen on Dec. 11 as students roasted marshmallows to make s'mores. Chestnuts baked in an oven nearby, and an abundance of green coffee beans were prepared to be heated next.

"The goal today is I just want you to just think about what is happening during this process and why is it so delicious," said Janine Nunes, director of education outreach at the Princeton Materials Institute.

The Science of Roasting event was part of the Center on Science and Technology (CST) Brainy Bites series, where students make and taste food while learning related science. As students snacked, Nunes dove into the chemical compositions of marshmallows and coffee beans. Then, she led students to identify the primary scientific reactions that occur when both foods are heated with air: the Maillard reaction, which leads to browning, and caramelization.

"These are things that we see in everyday life, and I think that ... makes

the science more accessible and palatable, because we can easily relate to it," said Ananya Chakravarti, a fourth-year chemical and biological engineering graduate student who attended.

"I want to keep learning and want to keep being curious about other fields," said fellow attendee Margaux Emmanuel, a first-year graduate student in the department of French and Italian. "I thought this was an excellent way to kind of have bite-sized science."

Brainy Bites is one of a handful of series the CST has launched in the past few years, all aligned with the center's goal to "advance STEM literacy across the University and beyond," according to Sami Kahn, CST executive director. The center was established on campus in 1989 as the Council on Science and Technology, but last year, was renamed to recognize its growth far beyond its faculty committee origins.

"We believe that STEM is relevant to everyone and is just a miraculous way of understanding the world around us," said Kahn.

During the 2024-25 academic year, CST

## S'MORE YOU KNOW

*Sanjana Venkatesh '26 roasts a marshmallow at the Science of Roasting event. Opposite: Graduate students Néhémie Guillomaître-Fischer, left, and Ananya Chakravarti decide on a dark roast for their coffee beans.*

hosted more than 70 events — primarily designed with undergraduates in mind — and averaged more than 40 attendees per event. According to CST administrators, a number of the series, such as Brainy Bites, started as singular events that were very popular.

**A Faculty Salon series began after an** informal group of faculty who enjoyed interdisciplinary conversation decided to organize gatherings that "focus on one material and see how people from different disciplines interpret this material," according to Z. Vivian Feng, assistant director of STEM education at the center. The group sent an email soliciting faculty volunteers interested in giving low-stakes, 10-minute flash talks, and Feng was surprised by the strong response. During the first year of the salons, faculty met three times to discuss glass. This year, the salons are focused on gold, with one gathering held in the fall and two more planned this spring.

The RadLab workshop series for students, which started virtually during COVID and is still going strong, is similar to the faculty salons in that students volunteer to give short talks of about 15 minutes, but the topic is entirely of their choosing. Sessions have ranged from language to 3D art to "trashion" (upcycling discarded materials to make fashionable pieces).

Lilia Burtonpatel '27, an ecology and evolutionary biology major, presented on video games with ecological themes after researching the subject to write a paper for a course. She realized that RadLab "would be a great way to share it and talk about this with people who are interested, and also a great way to practice science communication, which is a very good skill to have."

As a freshman, Burtonpatel served on CST's roughly 20-person Student Advisory Board (SAB), a group of undergraduates

who bring student perspectives to CST's event planning. Then, Burtonpatel spent a year as one of two leadership liaisons — student employees of CST who lead the student board.

“My role essentially with the SAB is [to] sit back,” said Craig Marshall, assistant director of STEM education at the center. “I watch them dream ... and I also provide them snacks, 'cause we all need snacks, right?”

Last spring, the student board conceived of and hosted a BioBeauty event, which brought together experts on beauty and skincare from and in and outside the University — such as molecular biology professor Jeffrey Stock, who has founded or co-founded several startups, including a skincare company — and featured hands-on workshops on perfume, henna, and foundation makeup.

“The CST gives us resources in order to host these events like BioBeauty, but



of course to use them, we have to be organized, and that's the main challenge ... executing the group vision,” said Burtonpatel.

In addition to brainstorming and hosting events, the students “can help get the word out” about all CST events, according to Manna Sam '27, a molecular

biology major who is serving as leadership liaison alongside Aanya Kasera '28, a fellow molecular biology major.

Sam told PAW that, this academic year, they are focused on supporting CST's social media.

“I do think that not enough people know about the CST,” said Sam. 

SAMEER A. KHAN '21 / FOTOBUFFY

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# IN SHORT

Princeton neuroscience professor **Samuel S. Wang** is running for Congress as a



WANG

Democratic candidate in New Jersey's 12th District, which includes the municipality of Princeton. He is one of 16 Democrats vying for the seat held by Bonnie Watson Coleman, who announced she will retire after the current term, her sixth in the House of Representatives.

Wang has used data science to advocate for equitable redistricting and election reform for over two decades. "This is a very challenging time for our system of government and life," he told PAW. "I think it is time for everyone to do what they can to save the system."

**Linguistics** will be offered as a Princeton major after a unanimous vote at the Feb. 3

faculty meeting. Currently, students can major in the subject through the independent major program, which 41 graduating students have done since the 2016-17 academic year, when a standardized concentration in linguistics was established. The Program in Linguistics, previously housed in the Council of the Humanities, became an independent academic unit in the fall. One senior and five juniors are majoring in linguistics this year. The program has four full-time faculty members and is hiring a fifth.

Sukaina Shivji '26 and Laura Zhang '26 received one of Princeton's highest honors, the **Sachs Scholarship**, named for Daniel Sachs '60. Shivji, a molecular biology major from Staten Island, New York, will pursue a two-year degree through the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Public Health in Disasters. Zhang, a School of Public and International Affairs major from Sydney, Australia, plans to study at the University of Oxford in two master's programs: criminology and criminal justice, and refugee and forced migration studies.

## University Reports Sophomore's Death

**J**EFFERSON VOELKER '28, A member of New College West from Boiceville, New York, died while on leave from Princeton, the University announced in an email on Jan. 27. The date and cause of death were not disclosed.

Voelker is the third student or postdoctoral researcher at Princeton to die this academic year, and the 13th in the past five years. "We know that every member of our community joins us in sending condolences to Jefferson's family and friends and in wishing them strength," Dean Regan Crotty '00 wrote in an email to the campus community. By L.O.

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ANNE JARVIS

ADMINISTRATION

# Librarian Jarvis to Retire

**UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN**  
Anne Jarvis will retire in the summer after 10 years at Princeton that included the completion of Firestone Library’s renovation and several other capital improvements to the branch libraries on campus.

Her departure follows two celebratory openings in the past few months, at the Marquand Library of Art and Archaeology in the new Princeton University Art Museum and the Commons Library in the ES and SEAS complex on Ivy Lane.

Jarvis served “at a pivotal time when digital technologies are changing how students and faculty read, study, and perform research,” President Christopher Eisgruber ’83 said in a statement. Jarvis expanded access to physical and digital resources and oversaw new programs and partnerships, the announcement said.

“I believe that Princeton University Library’s continued success will happen because it can and will build on great professional traditions,” Jarvis said in the announcement. “It has the flexibility to adapt to a world that will continually surprise us and the humility to work with others who complement library staff’s expertise.”

Before her decade at Princeton, Jarvis served as university librarian at the University of Cambridge. She plans to return to her native Ireland in her retirement, the announcement said.

Dean of the College Michael Gordin will lead the search for Jarvis’ successor.

By B.T.



Willy Landrigan '76 and Cindy Albert Link '76

Photo: Andrea Kane

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**PRINCETON  
ALUMNI WEEKLY**



## MEN'S AND WOMEN'S HOCKEY

# Keeping Up on the Ice

Tigers take turns with exciting Baker Rink performances

BY DAVID WEISENFELD

**P** RINCETON MEN'S AND WOMEN'S hockey have risen in the standings this year with record-breaking winning streaks.

The men's team won its first nine games at home, a first in the 103-year history of Hobey Baker Rink, en route to an 11-4 start. Meanwhile, a 13-game winning streak — the longest in the nation at the time — propelled the women's team to a No. 7 national ranking in late January, its highest since the end of the 2019-20 season.

In both cases, new leadership helped set the tone. First year women's coach Courtney Kessel inherited a talented roster and led Princeton to the top of the ECAC with its 15-5 record (20-7 overall). Kessel, an assistant coach from 2019-23, returned to Princeton after a two-year stint coaching the Boston Fleet of the Professional Women's Hockey League.

"She's done an incredible job. I don't know how many first-year coaches have broken the program record for win streaks," captain Issy Wunder '26 said. "She treats us like adults, which everyone really respects."

Wunder, who plays left wing, has

scored nearly a goal per game with 23 goals in her first 27 games. But it was a highlight-reel assist that may have been her most notable play of the season.

In overtime against ECAC rival Quinnipiac on Nov. 20, Wunder skated deep into the Bobcats' zone with the puck when a hard check knocked her flat on the ice. In one motion, Wunder swung her stick from that prone position and sent a perfect cross-ice pass to linemate Mackenzie Alexander '28, who fired a one-timer into the net for the game-winning goal.

## SHOOTING STARS

*Issy Wunder '26 led the women's team with 23 goals through early February. Below, Kai Daniells '27's five-goal game against St. Lawrence was the first by a Tiger men's player since 1962.*

Kessel saw that play as a key moment for the team's ability to win close games. "You can't play scared to lose. You've got to play to win, and that's a mentality," she said. "The mindset heading into third periods is we're going to win this game."

Wunder echoed that sentiment. "Sometimes in the past we've gotten blown out by some of these ranked teams that now we're skating with [and] beating," she said. "Once you can gain the confidence — like, 'Oh we've done it once, why can't we do it again' — that definitely helps."

The one-two scoring punch of Wunder and Alexander has contributed significantly. They have played on the same line with Emerson O'Leary '26 for the past two seasons, and the chemistry shows.

"They're special players, just the way Issy sees the ice, the way she can move the puck, and her reach is so long," said Kessel. "It's been nice to have coached her when she was a first-year here and now seeing her be our leader and use her voice has been a really cool transition."

Speaking of Alexander, Kessel added, "I can't believe she's only a sophomore. I hope she plays in the Olympics one day. I think she has the ability to do that. Just her explosiveness, her shot, everything. She's the total package."

For the team, Wunder thinks the sky is the limit. "We want to win an ECAC



championship. We want to make it to the Frozen Four,” she said. “I have a lot of confidence in this group, and I’m hoping we can make something special happen.”

### Second-year men’s head coach

Ben Syer also has something special percolating. His team’s record-breaking start at Baker Rink, after six straight losing seasons, enabled Princeton to briefly take first place in the ECAC and achieve a national ranking.

A longtime assistant with perennial powers Cornell and Quinnipiac, Syer has brought high energy to Princeton and given the team a spark, according to its leading scorer, Kai Daniells ’27.

“He really knows the recipe in this league, so it’s easy to follow him and trust his lead, and everyone’s really bought in so far,” Daniells said.

On the ice, Daniells has provided two of the season’s most memorable moments. In a 7-4 November win against St. Lawrence, he scored a record-tying five goals, a feat not achieved by a Tiger since 1962.

“I was able to get one at the end of the second [period], got the building rocking a little bit, and then they all just started piling in,” Daniells said. “It was one of those nights where everything was going right. Definitely a night I’ll remember for a long time.”

In a 3-2 January win at Baker Rink against No. 18 Harvard, Daniells scored the game-winning goal with 2.9 seconds left. The goal came after Daniells won a faceoff in the Harvard zone and then turned around to deflect a Kai Greaves ’28 shot into the net.

In addition to Daniells, Syer pointed to senior leadership and strong play from forwards David Jacobs ’26 and Brendan Gorman ’26 as factors in the team’s development.

Meanwhile, former Princeton players are taking notice. “This year I’ve left a lot more tickets for alumni,” Syer said with a smile.

He added that he would love to match the Princeton basketball teams’ sustained consistency and admires the job Kessel is doing with the women’s hockey program. “We do talk a fair bit,” he said. “I have joked we’re just trying to keep up because they keep winning.” ■

### WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

# Madison St. Rose ’26 Expands Her Arsenal to Lead Princeton

BY JENN HATFIELD

**T**HE FIRST BASKETBALL GAME Madison St. Rose ’26 played for Princeton in 358 days was, in her words, the “craziest game ever.”

The Tigers got stuck in Newark Airport for 13 hours before their season opener, arriving in Atlanta after midnight for a 2 p.m. tipoff — and then mounted a fourth-quarter comeback to defeat Georgia Tech. St. Rose had 13 points, five rebounds, and four assists in her return after tearing her ACL in November 2024.

To St. Rose, that game validated all her hard work in rehab. She said she’s felt like herself since preseason, and she’s even stronger and faster than before. During her recovery, she learned how to move more efficiently, which has enhanced her athleticism and helped her conserve energy. That is helping her not only now, but also next season, when she’ll have another year of eligibility to use outside of the Ivy League.

“It was very cool to learn about my body and learn the mechanics of how to make myself more explosive,” she said. “Learning that and then now adding the basketball aspect, I was able to ... make myself a more athletic player.”

Through early February, St. Rose was averaging 16.4 points, 4.9 rebounds, and 2.5 assists in 32.7 minutes per game, all career bests. She missed a game in late January after appearing to tweak her knee against Columbia, but she returned to the starting lineup for Princeton’s Feb. 6 matchup with Penn.

St. Rose has particularly excelled against some of Princeton’s toughest opponents, scoring 20 points in a loss at Maryland and 19 in an overtime win against Harvard.

“She’s playing like she’s on a mission,” Columbia head coach Megan Griffith said before facing Princeton.

**St. Rose is making her presence felt differently than she did two seasons**



MADISON ST. ROSE '26

ago. She’s taking and making more shots at the rim and the free-throw line. As a 5-foot-10 guard, she’s also posting up smaller defenders with the space Princeton’s new perimeter-oriented offense creates inside.

St. Rose said the offense gives her more flexibility to “be more of a facilitator and be more creative in what I want to do, instead of just being a spot-up shooter.”

With St. Rose leading the way, Princeton’s offense has been elite. The Tigers rank 34th nationally with 109 points scored per 100 possessions, and every starter averages at least 11 points.

“We have a lot of scorers on the court,” Berube said. “It makes my job a lot easier, not having to sort of manufacture ways to score, just putting our really good players in position to make the plays that they can make on their own.”

On the court, St. Rose is unflappable, rarely reacting after good or bad plays. But ask her about her comeback, and the joy is obvious.

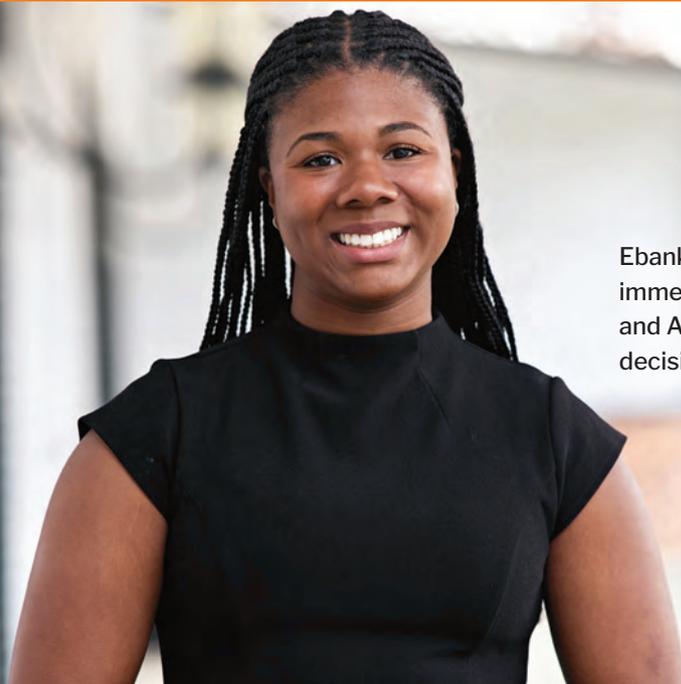
“It’s been so much fun,” St. Rose said. “Playing in these big moments versus watching from the sidelines is a huge difference, and ... playing with this team and the people that I love being around 24/7, it just makes basketball even more fun.” ■

# *Because of you...*

I've been completely transformed by my student experiences at Princeton. The opportunities to travel to different parts of the world and engage in stimulating coursework have been truly life-changing.

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— ALLIE EBANKS '27, *Centerport, New York*



Ebanks' participation in summer immersion programs in Spain and Argentina were crucial to her decision to major in Spanish.

Photo: Steven Freeman

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# TIGERSIDE CHATS

SPRING 2026

TigerSide Chats is a virtual series that highlights leading faculty members and administrators in conversation with alumni moderators.



**JANUARY 15\***

**Cicero: A Very Short Introduction**

YELENA BARAZ, *Kennedy Foundation Professor of Latin Language and Literature, Professor of Classics; Director, the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts*  
\*Available on demand



**FEBRUARY 19\***

**Princeton's Prison Teaching Initiative**

JENNY GREENE, *Academic Director, Prison Teaching Initiative; Eugene Higgins Professor of Astrophysical Sciences*  
\*Available on demand



**MARCH 19**

**Terms of Respect: How Colleges Get Free Speech Right**

CHRISTOPHER L. EISGRUBER '83, *President of Princeton University*



**APRIL 8**

**Bob Dylan in America**

SEAN WILENTZ, *George Henry Davis 1886 Professor of American History*

**MAY 5**

**Princeton Quantum Initiative**

ANDREW HOUCK '00, *Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Science; Anthony H.P. Lee '79 P11 P14 Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering*  
NATHALIE DE LEON, *Co-Director, Princeton Quantum Initiative; Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering*



**JUNE 3**

**Africa's Living Laboratory: Princeton's Partnership with the Mpala Research Centre**

ALY KASSAM-REMTULLA, *Vice Provost for International Affairs and Operations; Lecturer in Public and International Affairs*



TigerSide Chats are held 4:30-5:30 PM ET via Zoom webinar

Open to the public • Registration required

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# RESEARCH

ADVANCING THE FRONTIERS OF KNOWLEDGE



## DINOSAUR DISCOVERY

*A new study led by Princeton and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History found **Nanotyrannus** is its own species. It was previously believed to be a juvenile **T. rex** based on the discovery of a small skull found in 1942. Christopher Griffin, an assistant professor of geosciences at Princeton and lead scientist on the project, is an expert in age-dating dinosaur bones. He was able to confirm the new species by cutting into the hyoid bone, which is located in the neck, to reveal that the skull belonged to an adult dinosaur. "The novelty of this study is showing that these slender throat bones preserve a record of growth like limbs and ribs do," says Griffin, who is pictured here with a **T. rex** skull from the Princeton natural history collection. The study was published in December in the journal *Science*.*

DENISE APPLEWHITE / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



MARIEM ELGENDY '26 IN CUBA

## INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH TRAVEL

# Navigating Global Uncertainty

## How Princeton supports student studies abroad

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**W**HILE MARIEM ELGENDY '26 was on a trip to Cuba with the School of Public and International Affairs in January 2025, Cuba's status on the U.S. State Sponsors of Terrorism list changed twice. President Joe Biden removed it, and just days later as President Donald Trump began his second term, he added Cuba back to the list.

"We got to experience the bits of joy that the people had when they were taken off the list, and then what happened right when they got back on the list, and the disappointment filled the air," Elgendy said.

The six students on the trip also questioned whether they would be able to get back into the United States following the policy reversal, though they ultimately encountered no issues beyond a few flight delays and rescheduling due to a storm.

Elgendy's experience reflects broader uncertainty facing students traveling abroad through the University, as geopolitical shifts, expanded

travel restrictions under the Trump administration, and recent high-profile cases involving Princeton researchers have raised concerns about safety and preparedness. As international travel remains a key part of Princeton, the University has emphasized risk assessment, pretravel planning, and institutional oversight as core components to support students and other members of the University community abroad.

In the past decade, two Princeton-affiliated scholars were detained abroad while conducting research: Graduate student Elizabeth Tsurkov was kidnapped in Iraq in 2023 and released in 2025, and Xiyue Wang '15 was imprisoned in Iran from 2016 to 2019.

Princeton's Global Safety & Security (GS&S) oversees the University's travel security risk management program. According to Chris Holmes, the director of GS&S, the office focuses on predeparture engagement and education, in-country support for travelers, and continuous monitoring of security developments to

enable successful academic travel through effective risk mitigation, preparedness, and support.

During the 2024-25 academic year, more than 3,800 travelers made more than 6,300 international trips to 140 countries and territories, with students accounting for 80% of travel — faculty and staff make up the remaining 20% — according to Holmes. The most common destinations were the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, followed by China, Kenya, Greece, Spain, and Canada.

To manage travel risk, GS&S uses a tiered risk-based framework that assesses destination risk to determine baseline requirements for University travel to be authorized. Travel to higher-risk countries requires completion of GS&S's higher-risk travel process, including an approved exception, during which GS&S collaborates closely with travelers to identify risks, develop mitigation strategies, and reinforce security best practices related to lodging, movement, and in-country activities. Holmes declined to comment on whether Tsurkov's travel was an approved exception.

While all travelers have access to the same support resources, including emergency medical and security assistance through International SOS, a medical and travel risk service company, Holmes emphasized that different forms of travel pose different risks. He explained that short-term group travel may involve exposure to petty crime risks in tourist locations or transportation hubs, while longer-term independent research activities may encounter different or overlapping risks depending on the local environment and nature of their work.

**Many of the safety measures Holmes** described were reflected in Elgendy's experience in Cuba, which is considered a medium-risk destination. The Havana workshop, which focused on assessing Cuba's role in achieving sustainable development goals, was led by Carol Martin, a lecturer of public and international affairs, and Paul Lipton, SPIA's senior associate dean for academic administration. Two individuals from the group travel program joined the trip.

COURTESY OF MARIEM ELGENDY '26

When Elgendy applied for the trip, she had an interview where she was asked if she was prepared to handle certain situations that might come up in Cuba, such as if there was no water or a power outage. Once all the students were chosen for the trip, they had a predeparture meeting on safety rules while traveling.

Because U.S. credit and debit cards cannot be used in Cuba, faculty and staff on the trip carried cash with them to cover group expenses and told students they only needed their own cash for souvenirs or if they wanted to eat on their own. In the meeting, students were advised not to bring their cards on the trip. They were also informed about internet safety in the country, and that many of them would not have cell service while on the trip. In addition, they were advised not to say they were in SPIA because it sounded too close to “spy.” A professor who teaches a history class on Cuba also spoke to the group ahead of departure to share her experience living in the country and provide historical context.

For Holmes, preparation is central to reducing risk. “We encourage students to approach international research with strong situational awareness and cultural understanding. This includes learning about local laws and norms, understanding how authorities operate in-country, and being thoughtful about how their work may be perceived in the local context,” he said.

The GS&S office continuously monitors global developments, including geopolitical tensions, civil unrest, citizenship-based considerations, and transportation disruptions, and updates guidance for travelers as conditions evolve.

To Elgendy, the trip was well worth it. Each night, the group debriefed over dinner, discussing local norms and observations from the day, from learning that all grocery stores were government-owned to the importance of drinking bottled water. The experience ultimately prompted Elgendy to pursue her junior independent research on Cuba.

“It’s one of my favorite travel experiences that I’ve had here at Princeton,” she said. ■



#### COLLECTING MICROPLASTICS

## Alumni Spin Princeton Thesis Into Environmentally-Focused Business

BY DAVID SILVERBERG

**Y** IDIAN LIU \*21 and Nathaniel Banks \*21 credit Princeton for inspiring them to launch a startup focused on an area of pollution management that has become increasingly critical across the world: capturing microplastics found in wastewater.

Even though they met years earlier at Syracuse University, their light-bulb moment came while both were securing a master’s in architecture at Princeton. As much as they enjoyed specializing in waste infrastructure, they wondered if they could tackle a major challenge that went beyond designing buildings.

Driven by an interest in applying their design skills to critical civic infrastructure, their graduate thesis focused on plastic waste, specifically the under-recognized issue of microplastics.

Their research, titled “Plastic plastic,” proposed a radical new way of collecting and recycling all scales of plastic waste

from rivers into architectural building components.

This interdisciplinary thesis won a prestigious award, motivating them to continue their research beyond school, which eventually led to the creation of their company.

“We realized how microplastics was about as big of a problem as we can think of, and we thought of how we could apply our skillsets to address a global issue,” says Banks. “This is no longer just being seen as something that affects aquatic wildlife, but it’s something that’s affecting us, and I think that’s really shifted people’s focus toward it. No one wants to have their body filled with plastic.”

Based in Princeton since it launched in 2022, PolyGone Systems developed a floating filter that can capture most of the invisible tons of microplastics that stream into the world’s waterways every

**SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS**  
*The Poly Pod pilot at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority has captured hundreds of millions of microplastic particles over the past year.*

year. These minuscule particles, often invisible to the naked eye, can accumulate in huge amounts and have been found in

both the stomachs of marine animals and the bloodstreams of human beings.

Concerns about microplastics have made a big splash in the news in recent years, but the full extent of its impact on human health is still being researched. That said, experts generally agree that solutions to remove and lessen exposure to microplastics are a positive step.

Liu outlines how PolyGone’s filter works: Made of thousands of silicone fibers, it traps small particles due to their hydrophobic properties, meaning the microplastics stick to the bristly brush-like filter.

Banks goes on to say that the filter allows wastewater systems to recover the collected plastics, separating them from the bristles. Since most plastic is either buoyant or lighter than water, they are usually found on the surface or in the first 30 centimeters of the water column, where PolyGone’s filter operates.

The company recently wrapped up a pilot with the Atlantic County Utilities Authority in New Jersey and will soon be working with utilities in California, as well as with commercial brands such as Lululemon, which has manufacturing facilities in Taiwan.

Liu says their filter is critical for both marine health and aquatic pollution prevention. “Since we collect 98% of the microplastics found in wastewater, we

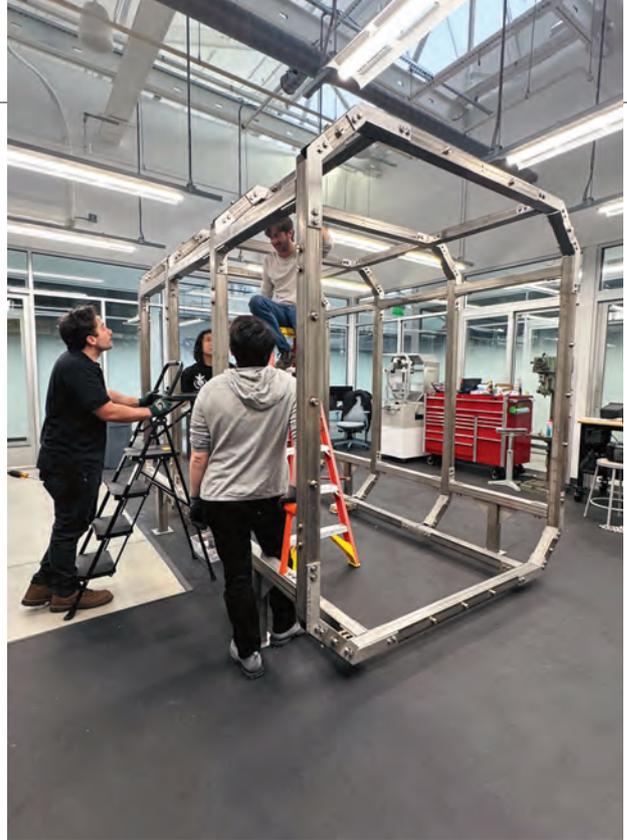
are reducing exposure to coastlines. The goal is to become the barrier in major emission points before the big flow goes into the ocean.”

**Recognized for their social impact**

by *Forbes* in 2024, Liu and Banks bring a range of entrepreneurial skills to their startup. Banks says he’s more of the engineering specialist, while Liu leads the project management side of PolyGone.

Their individual paths run parallel to each other, in a symbiotic way. Liu grew up in Tianjin, China, and was consistently fascinated by architecture and environmental protection. Banks left London for Syracuse after also being enthralled by building design, so much so he delved deep into crafting a “bunch of larger-scale infrastructure projects that also started to integrate things like water and natural systems” during his undergrad years.

When they both went to Princeton, Liu and Banks first launched an idea called



**MICROPLASTIC MONITORING**

*A behind-the-scenes look at the team building a Poly Pod, which is designed to autonomously remove pollutants from clean water.*

Project Plastic that served as the inspiration for PolyGone. After winning the People’s Choice Award at a Princeton Reunions pitch competition, PolyGone trained its vision on how to turn plastic waste found in rivers and oceans into building materials by melting them into panels.

Liu says as much as the company is focused on growth, they also want to educate the public about the scourge of microplastics. “We believe that talking about the problem is just as important as solving it, which is why we had a pavilion about PolyGone during our Atlantic City pilot project. There are so many great inventors in the world, but they are not all strong narrators.”

Banks echoes his colleague, saying, “The problem of microplastics pollution is going to require more than just technological solutions. It’s also going to require a huge amount of public and government and corporate engagement. It’s an issue you have to address from all angles. And once there’s a broad enough understanding of the problem, people will be more engaged to hopefully change their consumer habits.” **P**



YIDIAN LIU \*21 AND NATHANIEL BANKS \*21

BEHIND THE RESEARCH: MARCUS LEE

# Exploring Identity, Politics, and Legacy in Black History

BY CARLETT SPIKE



**M**ARCUS LEE CAN TRACE HIS INTEREST IN BLACK POLITICS, history, gender, and sexuality to his days at Morehouse College. While there he really absorbed the culture. “Morehouse is, of course, the alma mater of Martin Luther King Jr., and so we were really taught as soon as we started college that we had big shoes to fill,” Lee says.

Reading the biography *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* by Manning Marable was another early formative moment because it was surrounded by controversy for presenting a more flawed view of the figure. It led Lee to want to understand how differing views of history are developed and how people are remembered.

Lee ultimately studied sociology at Morehouse and earned his Ph.D. in political science at the University of Chicago. He joined Princeton as a fellow and lecturer in 2022 and became an assistant professor in the Department of African American Studies in July.

## Quick Facts

### TITLE

Assistant professor of African American Studies

### TIME AT PRINCETON

4 years

### UPCOMING CLASS

*Black Politics Since 1965*

## LEE'S RESEARCH

# A SAMPLING

### REMEMBERING RUSTIN

While researching the political and civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, who worked closely with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Lee was intrigued by the ways Rustin was written about. Historians, biographers, and the media “said radically different things about who he was and why he was important,” Lee says. This inspired him to explore further in three essays. The first dissects the parallels and disagreements found in all major bios of Rustin, the second examines the 2023 Netflix film *Rustin* and how it promoted a new wave of interest in the activist, and the final essay analyzes all that’s documented against the truth to understand how someone’s legacy is formed. At the heart of each, Lee

says, is the question: “To what end do we remember him?”

### MIXED MESSAGES

Lee is currently working on a book about gay and lesbian visibility. He’s researching the Black filmmaker Marlon Riggs, who was openly gay and produced films that explored race and sexuality. Lee is particularly interested in the ways media depicts Black communities and how these representations are received. He points to Riggs’ film *Tongues Untied*, a documentary about the experiences of Black gay men that aired on PBS in 1991, as an example. Riggs collected the viewer comments — where people called in to give their feedback — from each PBS station. The opinions were all over the place, Lee says, highlighting how little control



teaching for the third time this spring, Lee explores case studies of major historical moments bookended by the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the election of President Barack Obama in 2008. He covers the 1972 National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana, Anita Hill’s testimony against Justice Clarence Thomas, the election of Chicago’s first Black mayor, Harold Washington, and Hurricane Katrina, among other key events. Lee says his goal is to

Riggs had over its reception despite his intentions. The “act of giving oneself and one’s community over to uncertainty and unpredictability is really fascinating to me,” he says.

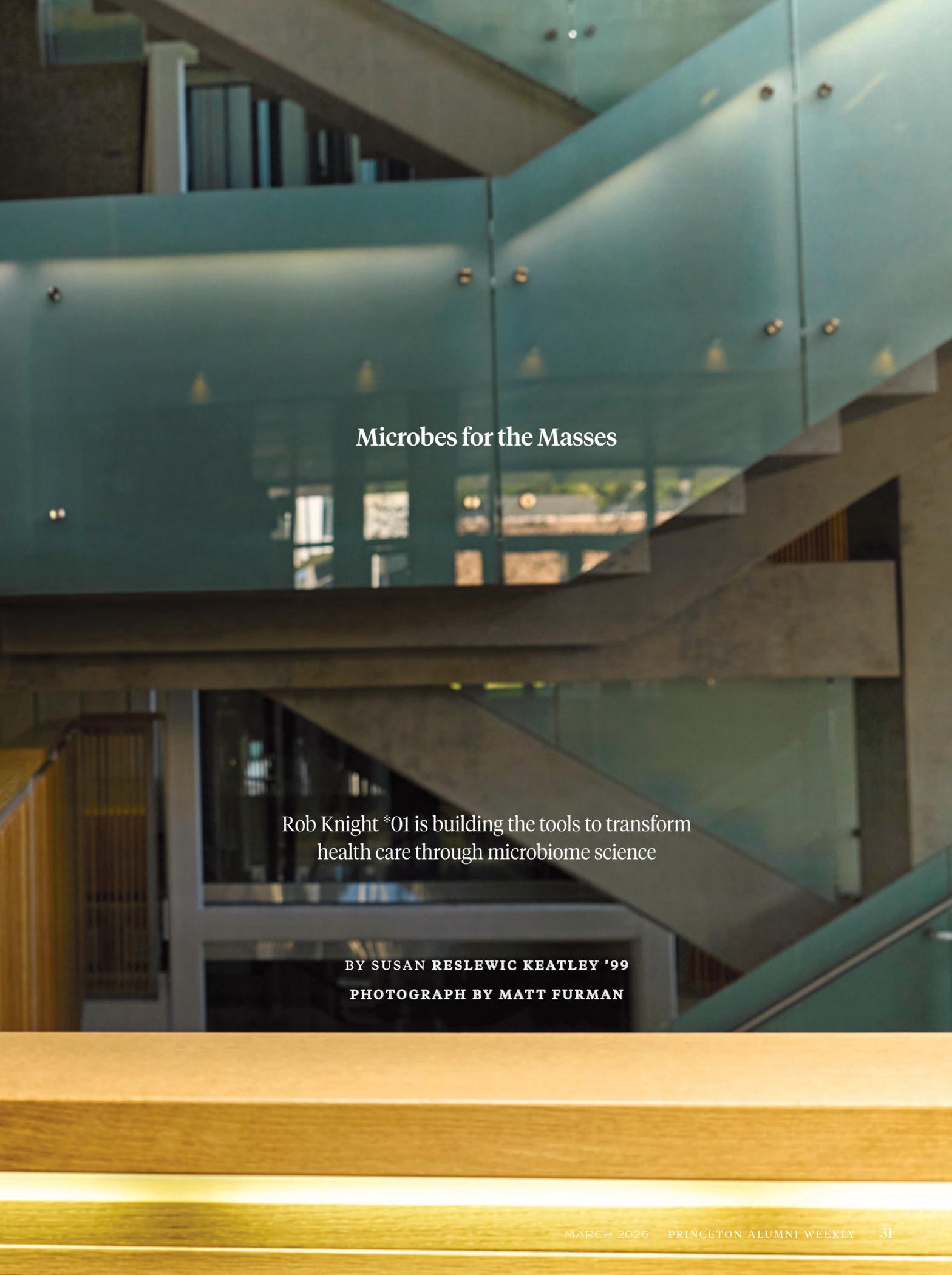
### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In his class *Black Politics Since 1965*, which he’s

help students walk through these pieces of history to understand how the events are connected and have unfolded over time. He wants students to know “the world they live in today was not and is not inevitable,” he says. “Many things led up to this.” ■

ILLUSTRATIONS: AGATA NOWICKA (TOP); MIKEL CASAL (BOTTOM)





## Microbes for the Masses

Rob Knight \*01 is building the tools to transform  
health care through microbiome science

BY SUSAN RESLEWIC KEATLEY '99

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT FURMAN

Rob Knight \*01, director of the Center for Microbiome Innovation at the University of California San Diego, is on his way to a meeting but first needs to change his continuous glucose monitor (CGM). The device sticks unobtrusively to the back of his arm and pumps a stream of data about his blood sugar, moment to moment, to his phone. He rips off the old patch, positions the new one, syncs it to his phone, and keeps moving.

On the walk through campus under crystalline blue skies and cotton ball clouds, with a hint of a sea breeze, Knight explains in his typical lightning-fast speech how his interest in wearable health devices relates to the subject of his research: the microbiome.

The microbiome is the term for all the microscopic life that's inside of us, on us, on our pets, in our homes, our backyards, and even in outer space. And more than showing us that, yes, microbes are everywhere, research has started to show us how much they matter. We know that the microbiome is a factor in immunity, brain health, and cardiovascular disease, and beyond our bodies, it shapes the yields of crops and even oil wells. Knight has played an outsize role in all of this, having developed the primary tools that the global community uses to study these invisible and pervasive life-forms.

And now, he says he dreams of a day when “based on what we know about your microbiome and other people’s microbiomes, we can say, ‘This is your risk of developing things,’” like cardiovascular disease, for example. “We could give people actionable information, perhaps integrated with wearables.” And that’s why Knight wants to learn about wearables, not because of any medical condition of his own but because, he says, “I want to make sure I’ve tried it before I ask others to.”

CGMs work because when people change their behavior — for instance, stop eating bananas — they see an immediate result. “What if you knew there was something you could do that would reshape the influence of your microbiome on your blood glucose, your immune system, and your stress?” Knight asks. While he admits that this “sounds pretty out there,” the 49-year-old is used to scientific bushwhacking. When he launched the American Gut Project in 2012, which has now collected and analyzed the stool of 30,000 participants, he says, “No one thought we should be asking the participants about many of the things we had on the questionnaire, like sleep for example. No one had any idea that the microbiome was linked to sleep, and our data showed some of the earliest links.”

**Knight has been defying expectations since he was a child** growing up in New Zealand. By 5, he was reading at an adult level and using the scientific names of all the specimens in his seashell collection. When he was 7, Knight’s father, John, says, an education officer came to visit the classroom and Knight explained the difference between metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary rocks. “The officer was shocked by his knowledge,” his mother, Allison, says with a laugh. “Sometimes it was hard for him,” she continues. “Some of the teachers were turned off when he would correct them.”

The family moved to Bethesda, Maryland, for 2½ years

starting when Knight was 9 so that his immunologist parents could take on research positions at the National Institutes of Health. Though Knight was drafted into a gifted and talented summer school, “he announced that he didn’t want to spend the summer shut up in a classroom,” Knight’s father says. Instead, Knight says he “spent a lot of time running around with a butterfly net” at the nearby state park, while also marveling over the computers at the NIH. “He became very enthusiastic about our early model Macintosh,” John Knight says.

In Knight’s second year studying biochemistry at the University of Otago in New Zealand, he approached his father with a research idea: to genetically engineer an invasive possum ravaging New Zealand to produce only males and thus wipe out the species. Knight’s father thought the idea superior to the possum poisons he was working on and arranged a visit to Princeton to meet with Lee Silver, an expert in this form of genetic engineering. Silver encouraged Knight to stay and work on the idea for his Ph.D. “I said, ‘We can’t possibly pay for that,’ and Silver said, ‘Don’t worry, we have scholarships for someone with his talent,’” John Knight says.

Silver transitioned his research to policy and ethics, and Knight found a spot in the lab of Laura Landweber ’89 in the ecology and evolutionary biology department. Here, Knight met Steve Freeland, without whom, Knight says, “I would not have taken my research into a computational direction.” Freeland, a postdoctoral fellow, and Knight, a new graduate student, were tackling the origin of the genetic code — the set of rules that determine how the information in DNA and RNA is translated — from different angles. “I was computational. He was laboratory,” says Freeland, who is now interim dean and vice provost of undergraduate academic affairs at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. While Freeland saw the code as a result of evolutionary adaptations, he says Knight was coming at it by looking at the molecules and what they could do and not do. “Intellectually, we could have been enemies,” Freeland says, but instead they developed a deep friendship, bound by their workaholic tendencies. “Meeting Rob was like meeting a mind that was propped up and walked around by a body,” Freeland says. “Our only social life would be to go to an eating club for a beer every now and then,” he says.

“I watched how [Steve] coded,” says Knight. “It made me appreciate the nuts and bolts of designing algorithms that work, and that work for the end user.” Eventually, Knight shifted his graduate work in a computational direction, which was not the obvious move at the time. In fact, a few years before, a professor at the University of Otago told Knight there were no applications for computers in biology. “You have to understand,” says Freeland, “this was 1999, one year before

everyone was freaked out about Y2K. The internet was new.” Landweber, now a professor of biochemistry and molecular biophysics at Columbia University, says, “Knight was the first bioinformatician in my group,” referring to the field, bioinformatics, that took off in the early 2000s as scientists completed the Human Genome Project and genomic data collections grew exponentially. “It was the whole notion that you could do biology on a computer,” she adds.

Freeland taught Knight coding languages and how to develop user interfaces; Knight built a computational model that was able to explain why different organisms used different sequences of DNA to encode the same sequences of amino acids, the building blocks of proteins. “Around this time I noticed he had a photographic memory,” says Freeland, who says Knight and some friends in a Dungeons & Dragons group had memorized “every piece of Lord of the Rings lore.”

Knight went on to win the United States Council of Graduate Schools award for the best Ph.D. in the life sciences in 2001 for his dissertation, “The Origin and Evolution of the Genetic Code.” At graduation, Henry Horn ’46, former professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Princeton, wore a computer motherboard on his graduation cap as a tribute to Knight. “Princeton was an incredible turning point in his career,” Knight’s mother says.

Knight traveled to Boulder to continue his study of the genetic code as a postdoctoral fellow in the lab of University of Colorado biologist Michael Yarus. Yarus, now an emeritus professor of molecular, cellular, and development biology at Colorado, recalls the “unmatched joy” he had in conversations with Knight. “I never talked to anyone like Rob. He’s funny, has great jokes, is a dynamo,” says Yarus. In the lab, Knight created software that essentially established a shortcut to determining RNA structure. “I’ve never met a person who was more ambitious,” says Yarus. Yet, adds Freeland, “behind that terrifying intellect, he is one of the kindest people.”

By 2004, the university had hired Knight as a professor with research programs spanning chemistry, biochemistry, and computer science. Knight’s first graduate student, Cathy Lozupone, had been working with Knight since Princeton, where she had been a research assistant in Landweber’s lab, and like Knight, caught the bioinformatics bug. Her master’s

degree work in soil fungal populations sparked her interest in the microbiome and led her to a research rotation in the lab of Norm Pace, who was studying communities of naturally occurring microorganisms. “Rob’s a computer jock,” says Pace, who is now, like Yarus, an emeritus professor at Colorado. “He came along and did what needed to be done.” Which was to make software that could uncover characteristics of microbes and the relationships between them more effectively than imaginable. The software, called UniFrac,

“solved an important problem,” says Knight, “because before then, you’d scrape five microbial communities off of rocks, and say each pair was different, and then what? We needed statistical techniques to integrate the communities. ... What happened then was that sequencing technologies completely transformed what we could do in terms of data collection.” Knight and Lozupone published the paper on UniFrac in 2005 in *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*; since then, it has been cited nearly 10,000 times, which is in the upper stratosphere for citations for a single scientific paper.

**The term microbiome first appeared** in a scientific publication in 1952, but most in the field agree that microbiome research began in earnest around 2005, right when Knight shifted his lab’s focus. “Rob was in the right place at the right time, with the right algorithm,” says Lozupone. By the mid-2000s, sequencing technology was generating heaps of data and computation had gone from the fringe to a core part of the biological science infrastructure. “Rob was smart enough to see that these things were converging. That frontier thinking is a direct thread to everything he’s doing now,” says Freeland.

With the release of UniFrac, microbiome studies proliferated, with Knight leading or collaborating

on many of them. An incredible set of studies showed that lean and obese mice had distinct microbiomes, and further, transplanting the fecal microbiome from an obese versus lean human into a mouse resulted in a fatter mouse. Another set of studies showed that families living together shared microbiomes with each other, and even their dogs, and that upon moving, a new home’s microbial community was rapidly taken over by the microbes of the occupants. In 2010, Knight co-founded the Earth Microbiome Project, with the goal of mapping microbial communities worldwide by swabbing for



**He “spent a lot of time running around with a butterfly net” at the nearby state park, while also marveling over the computers at the NIH. “He became very enthusiastic about our early model Macintosh.”**

— JOHN KNIGHT

microbes in oceans, soils, forests, mountains, and animal habitats, including the Komodo dragon enclosure at the Denver Zoo. Sampling was often not straightforward. “We only needed a swab’s worth of saliva,” says Knight, who had to hold a plastic tube under a Komodo dragon’s jaw, “and ended up with overflowing drool.”

While Knight and his lab continued to improve UniFrac, they also created QIIME (pronounced “chime”), which stands for Quantitative Insights Into Microbial Ecology. QIIME allows users to create evolutionary trees, plots, and other compelling visuals to get at the stories the massive datasets of microbial sequences can tell. “QIIME, still in ongoing development, was one of the earliest and best of the sequence-processing pipelines,” writes Pace.

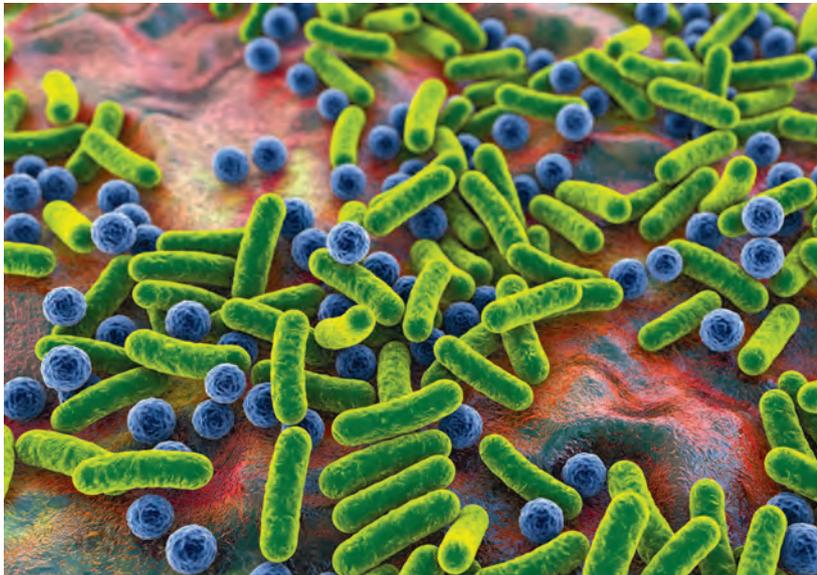
QIIME opened the door to extensive collaborations for Knight — with more than 1,200 papers, “he has the most extensive publication list I’ve seen for a mid-career scientist,” says Pace. “I like Rob a lot, but he bothers a lot of people. He can be pushy. But I interpret that as interest.” Knight is widely cited. As of February, his Google scholar H-index is 265, which means that 265 of his papers have been cited at least 265 times. “That kind of H-index is almost unheard of, especially for someone so young,” says Martin Blaser, a physician and microbiologist at Rutgers University who has been collaborating with Knight for 20 years.

“His tools and methods are our battle horses,” says Maria Gloria Dominguez-Bello, a microbiologist at Rutgers and president of a microbe preservation nonprofit called The Microbiota Vault, of which Knight is vice president. By the time Knight gave a TED talk in 2014, entitled “How our microbes make us who we are,” the studies made possible by Knight’s tools had pinpointed the massive role the microbiome plays in nearly every aspect of human health. Of the genes at work in our bodies, at least 99% are not human, but instead belong to our microbiome. “The microbiome went from this baby field to a major player in so many diseases and health issues,” says Lozupone, including inflammatory bowel disease, anxiety, drug metabolism, autism spectrum disorders and susceptibility to allergies.

“Now, we’re at the point where we know a lot, but we don’t know what to tell people to do.”

Enter Knight’s next crusade: giving people the tools to improve their lives.

**On a Tuesday morning in September, Knight sits in his office at the Israni Biomedical Research Facility on the UCSD campus, about to join a call with the World Microbiome Partnership, a global institution established in 2023 to foster collaborations and standardize data collection and**



analysis. Knight’s computational genius is not obvious when he logs onto the call, which is on Zoom, and mumbles, “What do you mean, meeting passcode?”

His partner on the call immediately congratulates him on his *Cell* paper, published that day, describing the latest tool Knight is excited about: long-read DNA sequencing. All DNA sequencing involves reading and then assembling

**“The microbiome went from this baby field to a major player in so many diseases and health issues. Now, we’re at the point where we know a lot, but we don’t know what to tell people to do.”**

— CATHY LOZUPONE  
University of Colorado associate professor

small pieces of DNA, akin to assembling a jigsaw puzzle. Long-read sequencing increases the size of these pieces — in some cases by a hundred times — and as a result, “Instead of this little blue thing which you don’t know is sky or sea or someone’s shirt, you have this huge chunk and it’s extremely obvious what it is,” says Knight.

This solves a key problem, Knight explains. If you are trying to figure out which microorganisms are in a sample, but there’s a lot of DNA from the host, it can be very hard and slow to get reliable answers using short-read

sequencing — those tiny blue pieces — which breaks DNA into tiny fragments. “I think a lot of the problems that are plaguing many different fields, from biothreat detection to ecology to clinical questions, will go away with the long-read approach,” he says.

Knight is driven by an optimistic fervor for the day when rapid readouts of microbiome information can tell an individual what they should eat, what medicines are effective, or even how to avoid Alzheimer’s. “The American Gut Project showed us that on population level it’s more important to eat a lot of different kinds of plants, rather than say, a huge salad that’s just spinach,” says Knight. “But we want to take

it down to the level of the individual.” Knight is pushing on developing wearables because of the immediate feedback. “If you have to collect a microbiome sample and then send it up to a lab and then a month later you get your results, it’s too slow. Ideally, you would have some kind of sensor that is looking at something that might help people come to these personalized microbiome conclusions.”

Knight points out that most health studies have been blinded, which means that a person in the study does not know if they are in a control group or what kind of treatment they are getting. “The idea is that you don’t want to influence people’s behavior while they’re in the study, but I think that’s leaving almost everything on the table because for people who use CGMs, at least anecdotally, what they love is that you can finally see what impact food and behaviors have on your blood glucose.” What’s exciting, he says, is the notion of designing a study that can capture people’s changes in behavior. “That way, you are empowering them to use the data,” he says.

And to get data that is both fast and precise, the whole pipeline has to be fast and precise, from collecting the sample to producing the final report. Knight’s goal? Get it done within 24 hours. Perfecting the pipeline is the focus of a weekly lab meeting, which I attend. Knight assures the students that nothing confidential will appear in this article, then he whispers that since everything is open source, there’s nothing confidential to reveal.

Making sure the tools are available to anyone who wants to use them is as important to Knight as making them. “He calls it the ‘democratization of science,’” says Lozupone, and this practice has enabled smaller labs to do more significant work. It’s also pragmatic in a funding landscape that has become uncertain. “We make the technology available to everyone, so anyone lucky enough to get funding can pursue the research,” Knight says.

Knight is no stranger to the funding roller coaster. After years of preparation, including training astronauts in sample collection at a full-scale mock-up of the International Space Station at Johnson Space Center, Knight’s group published work showing a dearth of microbial diversity on the actual International Space Station. “The ISS is an extreme example of environments that are being kept too clean, and the health of the occupants could be improved by reintroducing microbes from other sources. The question is, what is the minimum assemblage of species and systems that you can take with you to promote a healthy microbiome in space?” Unfortunately, funding for the project has ceased.

Funding for more traditional studies that look at the effects of nutrition on the microbiome is bleak — “first, a place like an avocado growers’ association can’t give \$1.5 million, and second, the study will be perceived as biased by that industry association,” he says. Yet, nutrition studies have a heroic past — “we cured goiter and scurvy.” With a wearable, each person effectively conducts their own long-term clinical trial, able to see what kinds of foods or behaviors affect molecules that the wearable might sense and that possibly act as a proxy for their microbiome.

As for what the wearable sensor could look for, Knight points

to the work of his colleague Pieter Dorrestein, a professor in UCSD’s school of pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences who works on identifying the kinds of molecules that microbes produce during the course of their metabolisms. Knight asks, “There are hundreds of molecules that can be sensed on these platforms, but the question is, are they useful or not?” Dorrestein says he believes if anyone can figure this out, it is Knight. “He is really good at uncovering hidden data patterns and he has this magic power to know computationally what to do to find that hidden data. And he brings together different disciplines — math, microbiology, chemistry — to make connections I could not make.”

Knight has succeeded with a version of this already, in oil wells instead of humans. His work identified which microbes residing in oil wells were indicative of strong oil flow — “the companies using this were able to reduce unproductive fracking by 90%,” says Knight, who founded a startup, Biota, of which the core data science platform was sold to Novozymes, and then the oil and gas IP later sold to BP.

Potential for new, rich collaborations drew Knight to UCSD in 2015. A position in pediatrics was appealing in cultivating his interest in how the microbiome shapes health from infancy. “When he arrived, he hosted an evening with all the pediatricians in the area,” says Gabriel Haddad, the chair of the pediatrics department, “to talk about the idea that some germs are beneficial to a child’s immune system, and how too many antibiotics can cause harm.”

Knight is the founding director of UCSD’s Center for Microbiome Innovation, where more than 140 UCSD faculty members and about a dozen companies, such as Nestlé and Danone, work on “real-world problems that are intellectually interesting that you might not necessarily come up with in an academic department,” Knight says.

Stuart Sandin ’02, a professor down the road from UCSD at the Scripps Institution for Oceanography who, like Knight, got his Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology, says “when you leave Princeton you go, oh, *of course* you go across departments! Rob and I both collaborate more than some of our colleagues, and that comes from having been at Princeton.”

Knight’s collaborations seem to multiply as quickly as the microbes he studies, and when asked when he has time to think, he says wryly, “off schedule.” But later, he describes how he prioritizes the tools, above all else. “We develop some core technologies and then look for application areas that are going to be interesting. The tools can uncover new kinds of microbes or microbial communities, or they can open up a new area we didn’t know the microbiome was involved in until recently, like the gut-brain axis,” he explains.

The microbiome will only become more central as scientists grapple with questions around human health and the environment. As Yarus says, “Knight was, and is, crucial to the development of the idea of the microbiome, and its contribution to biology. He will be remembered for that.” ■

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SUSAN RESLEWIC KEATLEY ’99 majored in chemistry and is now a writer and host of the podcast Science Fare.



# TAKING THE LONG WAY

## SNOW SCENE

*Members of the 60 South traveling party set foot in Antarctica after sailing the Ocean Tramp from Ushuaia, Argentina.*

60 SOUTH



# TO ANTARCTICA

From offshore oil surveys  
to remote waters,  
Laura K.O. Smith '05  
chose an unconventional  
course

BY JIMIN KANG '21

## ON A SUNNY WEDNESDAY IN NOVEMBER IN THE SOUTHERNMOST CITY IN THE WORLD, LAURA K.O. SMITH '05 DONS A BRIGHT BLUE PARKA BEFORE JUMPING IN THE CAR FOR THE MORNING'S ADVENTURE.

The plan is to find the geocache, a GPS-trackable container she has hidden on a mountain near her home in Ushuaia, Argentina, where she has lived with her husband, Federico "Fede" Guerrero, since they bought their house in 2018. Designed and built by a French boat captain named Jean Paul Bassaget, their wood-paneled home overlooks a mountain range of southern beeches that frame snowcapped mountains in the far distance — the kind of view Smith wanted geocachers to enjoy when she first hid her treasure several years before.

Such views are typical in Ushuaia, a frequent destination for travelers seeking sparkling lagoons and the breathtaking beauty of nature left mostly untouched. But Smith's reach extends far beyond the mainland. Since 2016, she and Guerrero have brought seasonal groups of eight to 12 adventurers to nearby Antarctica, where participants spend weeks watching whales, observing penguins, and making nightly gin and tonics with rinsed 10,000-year-old glacier ice.

"It's pretty amazing to me," Smith says of what she and Guerrero have achieved with 60 South, their travel company, which until 2025 was known as Quixote Expeditions. "It's just the two of us. We have charter flights going in and out. We've changed the game a little bit."

In addition to rebranding to 60 South, the couple added a third boat, Meridian, to their preexisting fleet. Typically, a journey to Antarctica involves either a large cruise ship with hundreds of passengers — tickets for which cost anywhere between \$6,000 and \$11,000 for a two-week trip — or private boats that charge hundreds of thousands of dollars to charter. In contrast, the business model of 60 South aims to circumvent both issues of size and cost while maximizing time spent on Antarctica proper. To get on board one of 60 South's journeys to Antarctica costs

between \$14,500 and \$29,900 depending on the boat and the type of cabin one selects.

A former Outdoor Action leader, Smith has a knack for logistics. In emails she is brief and to the point, her queries missing question marks. In person she is both eloquent and loquacious — on a TED fellow application, she listed one of her hobbies as "talking" — and her laughter, loud and unapologetic, punctuates her speech as she tells story after story. Walking under a dense canopy of trees dripping with the previous day's frost, she weaves tales of her time at Princeton with current events and news of her family. She occasionally stops to check the geocaching app, which shows where she stands relative to the geocache with a straight line and an approximate distance.

"Here, you lead the way," she says, handing me her phone. Her bearded border collie mix, Hai-Ma, bounds straight into the trees ahead.

**FIVE MONTHS BEFORE SMITH** and Guerrero embarked on their first voyage to Antarctica, they were married in Smith's parents' backyard in Maryland, not far from the Washington, D.C. suburb in Northern Virginia where Smith grew up. Her father, Robert Smith, had worked for the State Department on the "law of the sea," a body of international laws governing the rights and duties of states with regard to the world's oceans.

"We would have nautical charts on our table on a Saturday as he was calculating how far offshore a country owns," Smith recalls of her father, who would often ask her geography questions before bed. "By the age of 6 or 7 I could tell you about how exclusive economic zones were 200 nautical miles offshore."

Smith learned to sail in an Optimist boat on Deep Creek Lake, where her

family spent its summers. A historian at heart, she was fascinated by the American Revolution and grew to love the 1990 historical novel *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, an account of a 13-year-old English girl who boards a tall ship in Liverpool en route to Rhode Island. As the journey progresses, she struggles with a violent captain who threatens and undermines her for her age and gender, but Charlotte nevertheless resists; after the voyage is over, the once-cloistered girl ends up pursuing a sailor's life — and redefines who gets to live their life at sea.

Awed by the world in Charlotte's story, Smith set up her childhood desk to resemble that of an 18th-century captain (think quill pens, fake coins, an old chest). As a high schooler she volunteered on the Maryland Dove, a reproduction of the 17th-century English cargo ship that brought the first Maryland settlers to America, and as a rising college sophomore helped run a summer camp in a tall ship stationed in Martha's Vineyard.

"I think in all of my dorm rooms I had a poster of Captain Cook's first vessel," she says of her time at Princeton.

Smith started at Princeton intending to be a mechanical engineer. But after signing up for a freshman geology seminar featuring disciplinary heavyweights W. Jason Morgan '64, who developed the theory of plate tectonics, and Kenneth Deffeyes '56 '59, whose research furthered theories on "peak oil," her interests gradually inched toward the geological sciences. She found a home in the geology department alongside Richard Lease '05, with whom she studied abroad in New Zealand, climbed Mount Rainier, and did geologic fieldwork in Tibet as part of Lease's doctoral project at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

"Her sense of adventure and willingness to try new things is what stands out," says Lease, who went on to become a research geologist in Alaska. Recalling memories of caving with glow worms in New Zealand and preparing to climb the most glaciated peak in the United States, he admits that though "Outdoor Action at Princeton is one crowd, the people who continue with that throughout their lives is another."



Though Lease and Smith both ended up living and working in remote and dramatic locations, Smith — like many Princeton seniors — returned to Princeton after her semester in New Zealand with a familiar dilemma. “I come back senior fall, and everyone’s like, ‘Oh, I’m on my way to an interview with Goldman Sachs’ or ‘Oh, I’m typing up my Rhodes scholarship application.’ And I have no idea what I want to do next.”

Ever the adventurer, Smith knew that she wanted a challenge. She applied for a Princeton in Asia placement just as a fellow geology student sent her an email about a job. A recruiter for Schlumberger, the world’s largest offshore drilling company, would be coming to campus the following day; the application was due by midnight. “Of course, I wasn’t going to work for an oil company because I’m, like, Outdoor Action” — Smith trills off, indicating all the other reasons why it didn’t make sense for her to apply — “but I was like, you know, it’d be really good practice, and it is geology related.”

Smith got the job. Though she initially rejected it for an opportunity to teach in Vietnam, she eventually returned

to a Schlumberger position based out of Norway in the fall of 2006. She subsequently spent 10 years working along the coasts of countries including India, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Norway in a career move that she recognizes as “not your normal route to Antarctica.”

“It’s not the first thing I bring up, but when it does come up, I’ll be like, ‘Full disclosure, I used to work in the oil industry,’” she says. Despite the tensions that might arise between natural resource extraction and the ecological focus of journeys led by 60 South, Schlumberger, Smith says, “prepared me to deal with logistics. It prepared me to deal with risk. It prepared me to figure out my accounting. Maybe I would’ve been doing something else in those 10 years, but it definitely gave me a lot of skills to be able to do what we’re doing now.”

At 30, Smith became the youngest “party chief” — or crew leader on a survey vessel, in Schlumberger parlance — that the company had ever had; she was the first woman to hold the position in 15 years. By then she had also met her

#### FOR SAIL

*Laura K.O. Smith '05, shown in Ushuaia, prepares the Ocean Tramp, which she and her husband, Federico Guerrero, purchased in 2013.*

husband, Guerrero, the Argentine first mate of a Schlumberger survey vessel who was building a boat from scratch in Buenos Aires when the two met in 2009.

Building Quijote was a labor of love for a born sailor, Guerrero’s mother attests over dinner in the couple’s Ushuaia home. Since Guerrero was a child, he would make small model boats and try to get them to float. Quijote was his first life-sized undertaking. In January 2013, the couple took the hand-built boat to Antarctica along with two friends, bringing enough food for an entire year’s journey. On that maiden voyage they saw leopard seals and penguins, visited friends they’d met on previous adventures, and made pit stops at the many research stations that dot the continent, even finding, in one nondescript location, a wedding gift a friend had hidden for them.

“We found it! The cache, the lost



**FREEZE FRAME**

*The Ocean Tramp navigates icy waters in Antarctica.*

cache,” Guerrero exclaims in a video of their adventure, as Smith unearths the geocache. Inside is a penguin keychain and a long letter addressed to the recent bride. Not long after their trip to Antarctica, Guerrero left Schlumberger to pursue his dream of chartering his own boats; in 2017, Smith followed suit.

**T HE FIRST ADVERTISEMENTS**  
Smith bought for 60 South’s first passenger trip were in PAW. Lorraine ’75 and Randy Barba ’75

— who met on Princeton’s sailing team — were intrigued. “We were going to the ends of the Earth here. We wanted to make sure that [Smith] had it in hand,” recalls Lorraine of the Barbas’ initial deliberations. “One [FaceTime] conference with her, and we were like: Sign us up. We’re ready to go.”

The Barbas had traveled to Antarctica several years before on a Russian ship. As longtime boaters, they were familiar with what to expect, and yet their trip with Smith and Guerrero, which they undertook in February 2015 with their niece, Kate Barba, still surprised them.

For one, they hadn’t known (or rather, couldn’t tell) that they were the first

“We were going to the ends of the Earth here. We wanted to make sure that [Smith] had it in hand. One [FaceTime] conference with her, and we were like: Sign us up. We’re ready to go.”

— LORRAINE BARBA ’75

guests to go onboard the Ocean Tramp — a sailboat Smith and Guerrero purchased in 2013 — where they ate homecooked meals of soups, stews, bread, and Smith’s “amazing” pumpkin muffins. For another, “it was very personalized,” Lorraine says. “The woman has phenomenal energy, so anything you were up for doing, Laura was up for doing.”

Starting in Puerto Williams in Chile, the group sailed around the Chilean fjords before traveling eastward along the Beagle Channel and ending in Ushuaia. Along the way they rode in dinghies, walked across permafrost glaciers, and,

after anchoring for the day, hopped on a Zodiac boat for a nightly ritual of “searching for ice” that Randy could plunk into his drink.

“It’s a very difficult place to sail because you get these massive wind gusts that occur,” says Randy. “If you’re not ready for it, you’re doomed. So you had to be very careful about anchoring the boat, and Fede was a master at it.”

The trip gave Smith and Guerrero the confidence they needed to start expanding their business. A year after the Barbas’ expedition, the couple launched their first commercial trip aboard the Ocean Tramp. In 2018, they bought a second boat, the Hans Hanssen. Their added fleet allowed them to shuttle camera crews filming nature documentaries for the likes of the BBC, and their boats have served as research vessels for scientists and biodiversity experts who offer lay passengers important context on Antarctica’s wildlife and terrain. “We’ve brought a scientist since our very first trip,” Smith explains. “Me being a geologist and all that, it was important to me that people interact with the environment through that lens as well.”

Contemporary demand for Antarctic travel is impressive considering how, less than two centuries ago, the continent was virtually a hole in the map. It was only in 1911 that the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen became the first person to set foot on the South Pole. Just over a hundred years later, a record 104,076 people visited Antarctica in the 2022–23 season, according to the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO).

IAATO, an organization that Smith joined in 2015, issues guidance on best practices in Antarctica, from drone usage to the distance people should keep from wildlife. This guidance, in turn, is informed by internationally agreed-upon provisions that determine how humans engage with one of the most remote places on Earth.

The multilateral respect for Antarctica's sovereignty lends the continent — and with it, the communities that uphold it — a singular quality. Signed by 58 countries, the 1959 Antarctic Treaty stipulates peace on the continent and cooperation between the countries that use Antarctica for research. After the Exxon Valdez oil tanker spilled 11 million gallons of oil in Alaska's Prince William Sound in 1989, the treaty committee produced the 1991 Madrid Protocol to focus specifically on environmental protection in Antarctica, designating the continent as "a natural reserve, devoted to peace and science."

Now Antarctica faces more than just threats from natural resource mining. Smith, who attended the Antarctic Treaty meeting in India in 2024 as part of an IAATO expert delegation, acknowledges that climate change "impacts Antarctica more than the rest of us."

"The melting is huge," she says. "Before, you could bring in invasive plants, and they wouldn't survive. But now with things being just a little warmer, they might."

In the second half of the 20th century alone, the mean annual summer temperature of the Antarctic Peninsula rose by over 5 degrees Fahrenheit. Rapid warming has collapsed smaller ice shelves, caused sea levels to rise, and threatened the livelihood of certain

Antarctic species like the feisty Adélie penguin, whose food chain has been irrevocably altered.

"It's not an easy calculation of who's better and who's worse," says Smith, when asked whether traveling as part of a smaller expedition has a lesser environmental footprint than embarking on a large cruise. "The reality is, usually things that are good for the environment" — she lists as examples energy-efficient lithium batteries and purchasing nonperishables in bulk — "are good for business in terms of saving costs on fuel. So once you look for solutions, usually they're good for everybody."

**O**N PAPER, THE LIFE OF AN Antarctic adventurer suggests daily treks and outdoor adventures. In reality, it requires a lot of numbers and computer time, though in Smith's case even the drudgery has something of a high-wire quality to it. On top of Smith's responsibilities with 60 South, she also heads committees with IAATO, participates in the Polar Citizen Science Collective (PCSC), and is a member of the prestigious Explorers Club. In what she describes as a "cool tie back" to her origins, she attends treaty meetings with State Department representatives who work in the same office with which her dad was involved. "You can be as involved or uninvolved as you choose," Smith tells me. "And of course I'm a Type A Princeton student so I'm very involved because I can't help myself."

Fittingly, Smith's demeanor is almost always one of exuberance and energy; in her daily get-up of padded vests and hiking pants, she appears ready to leap into an adventure at a moment's notice. But a life of constant motion is not without its own juggling acts, required of her not only as a businessowner and partner, but also a daughter, sister, and mother of a 4-year-old, Livia, who has inspired Smith to reconsider how she spends her time. Though a tough decision, Smith — wanting to be as present in motherhood as possible — stepped down as chair of the board of trustees for the PCSC not long ago. And Livia has had no ordinary childhood: At 1 month old she

was on a ski lift, and at a year, on Isla de los Estados on an Explorers Club trip. Among her toys is a plushie of Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, and among her clothing a T-shirt (a gift from Lorraine Barba) emblazoned with the face of Arnold Guyot — a Swiss American geographer after whom Guyot Hall, former home of Princeton's geosciences department, was named. "I hope she's interested in what we're doing," Smith says, then laughs: "That girl is switched on. She's gonna be on our sales team by the age of 10 or something."

She also recognizes that her daughter might go on to do something entirely different — "and I'm cool with that." Smith knows, from firsthand experience, the many ways in which life's paths can diverge before reaching unexpected destinations. "I never feel like I had a path," she explains. "So it's just been interesting where the path has led, and I really feel like all the bits and pieces have added up."

On the way to find Smith's geocache, we walk 45 minutes or so along a Hacheros trail, named after the prisoners who cut wood from the mountains when Ushuaia was an Argentine penal colony. Occasionally Smith provides a subtle hint or indicates where it might be wise to turn back. "Usually there's something distinctive about where a geocache is hidden," she offers. I click the hint on the geocaching app: "Number tree," it reads.

The cache is nestled under a rock leaning against a tree stamped with the number '2082' in red ink. Finding the treasure at last, there is a feeling of exhilaration that only builds as one walks a little ways out of the forest and into a nearby clearing, where up ahead is the snowcapped Martial Glacier shining in the sun. Save for the sound of boots crunching on ice, it is quiet. The frost is melting, revealing the earth underfoot. Looking out at the view, it becomes clear that when Smith hid the geocache for strangers to find, she was hoping they'd stray a little further to glimpse what else lay ahead. ■

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JIMIN KANG '21 visited Smith in Ushuaia in November 2024.

PRINCETON



**IN THE WILD**

*Along with sharing their stories, former mascots Tom Culp '69, left, and Emily Henkelman '04 agreed to suit up again.*

# BEHIND THE STRIPES

What happens inside the mascot suit  
doesn't always stay there



BY MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAMEER A. KHAN H'21 / FOTOBUDDY

## The original tiger, naturally enough, was a fox.

The fox in question was Frederic Fox '39, the University's longtime recording secretary, known to many as "Mr. Princeton," and possibly the most rah-rah alum who ever lived. As an undergrad during the Great Depression, Fox became the first Princeton student to dress up as a tiger at an athletic contest. Or so he claimed.

Back in 1936, in the depths of the Depression, Fox's father could not send him money for tickets to the Yale game. But he did work out a deal with a New York furrier for the loan of a genuine Bengal tiger pelt. Thus attired, Fox found that he could not only walk into Palmer Stadium free of charge but wander down onto the sidelines.

"It was a roving 50-yard seat, and I didn't pay a nickel for it," he boasted in a 1975 report, "A Natural History of the Princeton Tiger," for *Tiger Magazine*.

However, even Fox conceded that his claim to be the first guy in a tiger suit might not stand up to scrutiny. "I'm sure there must have been crazier students here before me," he wrote. What we do know is that no one else tried it until 13 years later.

In 1949, J. Edward Craig '53 tried out to be a cheerleader. Undeterred when he didn't make the cut, he had his mother rent him a tiger suit from a New York City costume shop, and he wore it to the Penn game at Palmer Stadium on Oct. 8. With temperatures over 80 degrees that day, Craig sweated off as much as 12 pounds in water weight, according to his granddaughter, Emelee Craig, but he continued to perform for the rest of the football season. His antics proved so popular that the University made the Tiger mascot an official part of the cheerleading squad the following year. It also sprang for a better suit, upgrading from cloth to rabbit fur. A year later, it upgraded again, this time to a suit made from four and a half real tiger skins sewn together by a taxidermist.

Princeton's teams have been known as the Tigers since the late 19th century, but when it comes to the Tiger mascot, history tends to be murky. A few, like Fox and Craig, are remembered. One, Blanche Rainwater Kapustin '95, wrote a book about it: *Tigering: Memoir of an Ivy League Mascot*, published in 2013.

The rest, sadly, are largely forgotten.

Hoping to rescue them from obscurity, PAW has delved deep into the archives and rounded up 10 former mascots, one of the current mascots, and a few other sources. They all want a chance to tell their tail. Er, tale.

Just to be clear, we confine ourselves to the human Tiger mascot. From time to time, Princeton has put a real, live tiger on the sidelines — heavily sedated, one presumes. That is worth a story of its own. But not this one.

*When it comes to the mascot, usually the student seeks the suit. Sometimes, though, the suit seeks the student.*

**Tom Culp '69:** I was a cheerleader at Lawrenceville. When I got to Princeton, the head cheerleader was Tom Handy ['69]. Both our fathers had gone to Penn State, and Tom knew that

my father had been the Nittany Lion mascot. He approached me at tryouts and said, "You've got this in your blood."

**Peter Maritz '79:** We had no tryouts. A good friend of mine, Leslie Brooks [Bennett '80] was the captain of the cheerleaders, and she said, "Hey, I need help. Are you willing to do this?" And I said, "Well, that sounds like it'd be fun."

**Dan Davenport '00:** My freshman year, there was a sign in my entryway announcing tryouts for the mascot. I thought, that sounds like the most terrifying, awful, out of character thing I could possibly think of doing. That's what I'm here to do. Let's go try it.

**Emily Henkelman '04:** I was a gymnast through

high school and had a coach who was the [Philadelphia] 76ers' mascot. What I didn't realize was that his costume consisted of just sneakers and spandex and a very small head. When I got to Princeton, I tracked down the assistant athletic director and was told, "OK, if you're interested, you can come shadow at a football game." When I showed up, they told me that the real mascot had not been able to attend, so I should get in the suit. The only instructions they gave me were, "Don't take the head off. Don't talk. And have fun."

**Sam Ruona '26:** My freshman year, I saw a campus job posting for the mascot and considered it but decided not to apply. The next year, I saw the same posting and thought, why not? When I showed up for tryouts, there were about 15 other



### CATS AND DOGS

*The Tiger mascot takes pleasure in putting the Yale Bulldog in a compromising position in an undated photo.*

people there and they were all talking about their dancing experience. So I thought, 'Oh, I'm screwed. I'm not getting this.' And then I found out that they were all there to try out for the cheer team. After a while, someone came over to me and said, "You're the only one here for the mascot. When can you start?"

*The costume has evolved considerably over the generations. But one constant is that it is hot, stuffy, and smelly inside. In 1953, PAW reported that mascot William Garton '55 passed out from the heat during the second quarter of the Lafayette football game. Fortunately, his predecessor, Craig, was in the stands and finished the game.*

**Charles Stephenson '62 \*64:** It was miserable in there. You were doing it out of love, but it was not a pleasant place to be.

**Culp:** It was just exhausting. It was a lot of fun but wearing one of those costumes for three or four hours was pretty tough, especially when the weather was warm.

**Maritz:** It was hot, sweaty, scratchy, stuffy. Most of the time I wore a T-shirt and gym shorts under the suit and just dealt with it from there.

**J. Graham Findlay '66:** The only thing I wore under it was a jockstrap.

**Henkelman:** We had more than one mascot and of course we all shared the same suit, which gets really sweaty and smelly inside. On weekends when there were back-to-back games on Friday and Saturday nights, it was tough to be the Saturday mascot. I learned to pick the Friday games whenever possible.

**Ruona:** The new suits aren't too uncomfortable, but they are hot and the visibility is pretty bad. We had the Tiger's birthday party recently and invited other mascots from around the area to attend. They were all appalled at how little vision we have.

*The mascots also agree that there is something about artificial fur and a ferocious headpiece that turns them into a different animal.*

**Ruona:** That's one of the reasons why it's nice being anonymous, because you're free to do whatever you want. I definitely am a lot more mischievous and flamboyant.

**Culp:** It was a chance to go out and say hello to anybody, sit down with anybody, and get your picture taken. Everybody enjoyed an outgoing Tiger that went into the crowds. I did all sorts of things that I wouldn't have done otherwise.

**Henkelman:** I always thought of myself as more of the Disney World type of mascot than the professional sports team mascot, so it was all about the interactions with the kids.

**Blanche Rainwater Kapustin '95:** I've given that a lot of thought over the years, and I don't think it's just the suit. I think that we become different people for different roles we have in our lives. We always wear masks, whether it's literal or physical.



#### CAT NAP

*An unnamed Tiger takes a well-earned rest after the football team beat Rutgers 41-14 on Sept. 27, 1970.*

*The mascot does not have a gender, but for several years after the advent of coeducation, Princeton had two mascots, a Tiger and a Tigress. The Tigress first appeared in 1973 and was discontinued in the late-'80s.*

**Martha (Marty) Paxton Franchot '77:** I was the first Tigress. My freshman year, I went to the opening football game and thought, this is a co-ed school. Where is the tigress? I asked the Tiger after the game and he said, "We don't have one." I said, "Well we should," and he said, "It's a big job, you should check it out first. Why don't you go to the Cornell game and wear my suit?" So I did. The suit stunk — I don't think it had ever been cleaned — and it was made for a 6-foot man, so the crotch was around my knees and I kept having to push the head up to see. But I had a blast. Freddy Fox thought it was a wonderful idea, so he found a rich alum who paid to have an extra suit made for the Tigress, with bows and big eyelashes.

**Kathy Kovner Kline '79:** The year I was mascot, I drove myself up to New Haven for the Yale game, with the suit in a bag next to me. I parked at the Yale Bowl but had no idea where to change. Finally I saw a tent and ducked in there to dress behind some boxes. Just as I was finishing, I heard a loud and somewhat inebriated voice shout, "Hey guys, it's the Princeton Tiger!" There were a bunch of guys in their 40s — I had wandered into the Yale 25th reunion tailgate. I ran out of that tent and into the stadium pretty quickly!

*During the 1950s and '60s, the names of the Tiger mascots were widely publicized. A few of them even became minor celebrities. A 1965 story for Sports Illustrated, possibly written by Frank Deford '61, said: "Princeton, which is already losing All-America Basketball Player Bill Bradley ['65] and Fullback Cosmo Iacavazzi ['65 \*68] ... may also have to do without the services of J. Graham Findlay. ... Findlay, you see, is the Princeton Tiger, by consensus the best Tiger ever. To earn his stripes, Findlay had to qualify in size, authenticity of roar, length of tail and savagery of mien. Furthermore, he has not lost a hair of his \$665 tawny fur suit, though last year 50 Penn freshmen tried to skin him."*

By contrast, most recent Tiger mascots have preferred to remain anonymous until their careers were over.

**Culp:** My five roommates knew who I was and the guys in my eating club. *The Trentonian* even did a story about me. But generally I didn't want people to associate me with the Tiger because the Tiger is the Tiger.

**Kapustin:** When I started, only the cheerleaders knew who I was. Maintaining my anonymity was so important that when I left my dorm carrying the mascot suit in a bag, I would use different entryways, just to be on the safe side.

*Mascots are supposed to have fun, but from time to time, they can get carried away. Football games against Dartmouth have seemed to bring out the worst mischief.*

*At the 1952 Dartmouth game, for example, Garton, in his mascot suit, fielded one of Princeton's extra points and ran it back the length of the field, earning Princeton a 5-yard penalty on the ensuing kickoff. A dozen years later, Findlay fortified himself with something a little stronger than usual before a contest up in Hanover.*

**Findlay:** Oh, yeah, I got s--- faced prior to the Dartmouth game thinking it might enhance my performance. Wrong! It was a disaster. Lesson learned. I never had a drop of controlled, or more commonly uncontrolled, substance after that.

**Stephenson:** My most mortifying moment was standing up in front of 40,000 fans at Franklin Field. Some Penn student came up behind me and sawed off my tail while I wasn't paying attention and ran away with it.

*In 1985, the officers of the Princeton University Band felt compelled to write a letter to The Daily Princetonian addressing complaints about their performance during the halftime show at the Lehigh football game. "To our knowledge," the band members wrote, "the*



#### DRINKING ON THE JOB?

*The Tiger mascot pretends to down a large bottle of gin in an undated photo.*

*negative [comments] all stemmed directly from the actions of the two Tiger mascots. For the uninformed, the Tiger mascots simulated the process of creating little tigers on the field. It is our goal in this letter to inform our audience and the public that the Tiger mascots are not in any way connected with the Princeton Band."*

*Even well-meaning fans, though, can be a problem.*

**Ruona:** It's hard to advocate for yourself in the suit, while not speaking and staying in character. Like, getting your tail pulled. When the kids do it, it's fine. But when it's a grown adult, I'm like, "There's a person in here. Can we respect that?"

*Then there are the fans, usually for the opposing team, who are not so well-meaning. On several occasions over the years, serving as the Tiger mascot has been downright dangerous.*

*In 1963, for example, a group of Harvard students swarmed the field in Cambridge after the final gun, knocked the mascot down, and stole his head and tail. Athletic director R. Kenneth Fairman '34 told the Prince that there were no plans to buy another suit for the rest of football season and that the Yale and Dartmouth games might be played without a mascot. Seven years later, Dartmouth rowdies also jumped the Tiger. "[M]any attempts at patching notwithstanding," the Prince reported, "the sacred costume had seen its last day." An alum, Robert Campbell '46, purchased a new tiger suit for the cheerleaders the following year.*

*A generation after that, more than 30 Penn fans mobbed mascots Jeremy Glantz '90 and Denis Curran '93 at Franklin Field in 1993, making off with their headpieces. "Our general feeling was that this was a great joke, but not the way they went about it," Glantz said afterward. "I was lucky to get away without injury."*

*Kapustin, on the other hand, was not so lucky. In probably the worst mascot attack, 14 Cornell band*



#### 'DISNEY WORLD TYPE OF MASCOT'

*The Tiger mascot entertains children at a football game.*

members jumped Kapustin during a game in Ithaca in 1994, pinned her to the ground, and tried to rip off her headpiece, which was held on by a chin strap. Kapustin, who was taken to the hospital, suffered a scratched throat. The Cornell band sent her a written apology and voted to suspend itself from playing at the following week's game.

**Davenport:** My sophomore year [1997], Palmer Stadium had just been torn down, so all our games were away. When we went up to Harvard, there was a rumor that they wanted to kidnap the mascot, and so I could only have limited range of movement, closely followed by security.

**Henkelman:** By my time, I could not go to away games because of prior crimes against the mascot. But the Penn Quaker always came to Princeton for basketball and football games and brought supplies, including a cleaver at one point, which he planned to use to chase me around. He approached me out of costume before the game and said, "I'm going to fight you." He tried very hard. Security broke us up a couple of times.

**Ruona:** The only games I traveled to were the Ivy Madness and March Madness tournaments, and there haven't been many problems other than heckling student sections. Things have calmed down.

*The athletic department washes the mascot suits, sprays the headpieces with disinfectant, and patches them as needed. Often, though, the costumes remain in use until they wear out, leading to complaints from students as well as alumni.*

*"It is an outrage that this flea-bitten rug will be strolling onto the floor tonight to represent the University on national television," the Prince editorialized before the 1998 NCAA men's basketball tournament. "Surely the school with the fourth-largest endowment in the nation could afford to fork over the paltry sum that would finally give athletic teams and the student body an honest-to-goodness Tiger they could be proud of. Take a lesson from Clemson. They have a tiger. We have a cut of upholstery held together by duct tape and chewing gum."*

**John Gore '68:** In 1992, I was working in the Annual Giving office, and we wanted to invite the Tiger to a staff birthday party. I called over to the athletic department and they said, "You don't want the Tiger. It stinks so bad." So I put together a consortium to buy some new suits. You can't go to Macy's for that, but eventually I found a supplier in the Garment District in New York who had done costumes for Broadway shows. The guy got a couple of people to work doing sketches and found a place up in Massachusetts that would make artificial fur. They spray-painted

the black stripes onto it. We decided that it wasn't fair to have just one suit. So we got one made for someone about 5-foot-8 and then a bigger one in case we had some galoot who was over 6 feet.

**Greg Manger, owner, Costume Specialists Inc., Columbus, Ohio:** We designed and manufactured the current Princeton Tiger suits in 2013. Our company has done a lot of mascots, including the Columbia Lion and Brutus, the Ohio State Buckeye. Princeton worked closely with our design team. We then sent over material samples and, once those were approved, we sculpted the

headpiece. The whole process takes about 12 to 14 weeks. Those suits cost \$4,400 apiece, but they would be a little more now.

*Given the number of events they must cover, there is now more than one person serving as the mascot. Here's a little secret: They are not always students.*

**Kapustin:** I've been at Reunions where I've chatted up the mascot and told them, "Hi, I was the mascot, just wanted to wish you luck." And they'd say, "Actually, I work on campus. I'm not a student." I was so surprised the first time they told me that.

**Maritz:** There are a hell of a lot of games. Doing it by yourself is a big time commitment. As a student at Princeton, time is one of the most precious things you've got.

**Ruona:** Before me, we would hire out to an ex-professional mascot who lives in the area. Now it's

transitioned primarily back to students. We're trying to build our network to have five to eight students who can rotate between all the sports.

*Although the mascot once attended only football games, today's mascots try to support all Princeton teams, as well as other events such as the P-rade and the Special Olympics. Wherever they go, they serve as a symbol of the University.*

**Kapustin:** I felt like I should be everywhere. I had friends who were on the track team, and no one goes to cheer for track and field. So I went. I also went to a baseball game, a soccer match, some rugby games. I mean, I had never seen rugby before. It wasn't about the Tiger wanting to be seen. It was about me wanting to make those students feel seen.

**Kline:** The mascot is there to galvanize the crowd's attention and focus everyone on pulling together as a community. You're sort of a nonhuman embodiment of Princeton, so you don't represent just one type of person. Everyone is unified in those orange and black stripes. That's something we need more of these days. **P**

MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83 is PAW's senior writer.



#### FIRED UP

*The Tiger mascot oversees a bonfire in 1951 to celebrate the football team beating Harvard and Yale.*

# FORWARD

## AND BEYOND

### SAVE THE DATES

Join **President Christopher L. Eisgruber '83** in conversation with alumni leaders at upcoming gatherings around the country to celebrate the Venture Forward campaign and learn what's next for Princeton.



**December 3, 2025** ✓  
**BOSTON**

**Melissa Wu '99**  
*Chief Executive Officer,  
Education Pioneers*



**January 21** ✓  
**CHICAGO**

**John Rogers '80**  
*Founder, Chairman & Co-CEO,  
Ariel Investments*



**March 10**  
**SAN FRANCISCO**

**Bob Peck '88**  
*Managing Director,  
Fremont Group*



**March 12**  
**LOS ANGELES**

**Mason Morfit '97**  
*Co-Chief Executive Officer,  
ValueAct Capital*



**April 16**  
**NEW YORK**

**Louise Sams '79**  
*Chair, Board of Trustees of  
Princeton University*

“Terms of Respect: How Colleges Get Free Speech Right,” President Eisgruber’s new book, will be available for purchase at the events.

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



# PRINCETONIANS

ALUMNI STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES



## TALKING SHOP

*Josh Marshall '91 isn't surprised that Talking Points Memo, the political news and analysis website he started as a one-man blog back in 2000, is still standing — even as the journalism industry is littered with the carcasses of digital-first sites that launched around the same time. Talking Points Memo hasn't just survived, it continues to drive conversation in progressive circles and break news, often outpacing long-established (and better funded) news organizations. "We just kept innovating, coming up with new ways of doing things," Marshall says. Read more about how Marshall has kept Talking Points Memo afloat at [paw.princeton.edu](http://paw.princeton.edu).*



## PRINCETON WRITERS GROUP

# Finding Community in Creative Writing

BY HARRISON BLACKMAN '17

**I**N DECEMBER 2024, FIVE PRINCETON alumni returned to campus — not for a reunion, but to work on their fiction in a cozy farmhouse setting. “It was a nice time to hang out with friends who are in the same boat as you,” Laura Hankin ’10 says of the retreat. “To almost feel like you had some co-workers in a profession where you don’t really get co-workers in the same way.”

Some writing retreats can be aspirational, involving unproven writers attempting to complete their first manuscripts. But in this case, the “Princeton Writers Group” (“PWG”), as they call themselves, was celebrating a mutual accomplishment. By the end of 2025, Sash Bischoff ’09 says, “all five of us [became] published novelists.”

Creative writing workshops at Princeton are exciting, competitive affairs, in which students generate fiction for peer critique under the supervision of esteemed professors at the pinnacle of

the writing world — figures such as A.M. Homes and Aleksandar Hemon. But out in the real world, writing fiction can be a lonely exercise, filled with quiet focus and cold emails to literary agents that often go unanswered.

During her Princeton career, Bischoff found a community in her creative writing courses, meeting Daria Lavelle ’09 and Lovell Holder ’09 in a workshop taught by Joyce Carol Oates, and Blair Hurley ’09 in another led by Jeffrey Eugenides. Bischoff found a similar artistic fellowship in the Triangle Club, where she collaborated with Hankin.

When she graduated, Bischoff wanted to continue that literary exchange. Before her Princeton student email expired, she wrote to all the creative writing students from her class year, asking whether any wanted to join a writers’ group modeled after their collegiate workshops. Lavelle and Hurley took up the call, and in the first few years of the group, they met

**LET’S CELEBRATE**

*From left, Blair Hurley ’09, Sash Bischoff ’09, Lovell Holder ’09, Laura Hankin ’10, and Daria Lavelle ’09 at a writers retreat the group held in Princeton in December 2024 to celebrate that they each were officially published authors.*

at a vegan café in New York City’s West Village. (As various members left the city and pursued lives and careers across the U.S. and Canada, they moved to Zoom.)

While Lavelle and Hurley explored their own writing journeys at master of fine arts (MFA) programs at Sarah Lawrence and New York University, respectively, Bischoff was simultaneously finding her way as a director in the fast-moving world of New York theater. “It was such a gift to have that group, because it did keep me writing and thinking about writing,” Bischoff says.

Some members have come and gone, including Zeb Blackwell ’09, Sadye Teiser ’09, Juliana Yhee ’09, Catherine Mevs ’09, and Courtney Toombs ’09. Hankin joined the group in 2020 and Holder in 2021. They’ve had longevity and shared success in a format where many other groups fizzle. “I think with a strong five, there’s incredible accountability,” Holder says. “It also just puts the pressure on you to submit more frequently,” which Holder explains helped them generate more material for their personal projects.

**For writers who want to advance their craft,** MFA programs in creative writing can be costly — up to \$80,000 for a two-year degree with typically little in the way of grants and scholarships — with a toxic atmosphere of competition. “It was always intense in my MFA program,” Hurley says of her experience at NYU. “I got the chance to work with some amazing teachers, and it was a great experience, but I definitely felt always this pressure to perform.” For Hurley, the contrast between the MFA environment and that of the Princeton alumni workshop was sharp. “It was just really wonderful to have this group that was all about support and encouragement instead of competition.”

Because they are working in different genres, Bischoff says, their literary goals

are different, adding that they “really want the best and the greatest success for each member of the group.”

According to Hurley, the group departs from traditional workshops by reading and giving feedback on entire manuscripts, rather than just 20-page chunks. Plus, the members often advise each other on the business side of writing, an aspect not often addressed in academic settings. “This group was so invaluable because as we were kind of pitching and [our] agents were going out with our manuscripts,” Lavelle says, “we had a sounding board for anxieties and questions.”

Each member of the group tends to have their own specialties as constructive critics. Whereas Lavelle is a “plot doctor” (given her background in screenwriting), Holder is a dialogue specialist (thanks to his theater and filmmaking experience), Hurley focuses on the sentence level, and Bischoff often gives detailed notes on characters. “She’ll send your feedback afterwards and with all of her notes in it,” Hankin says of Bischoff. “And if you get through a page of your book without Sash having put a note on it, you’re like, ‘Wow, I can’t believe it — this page must be amazing.’”

By 2024, the group realized that the following year — all members having books at various stages in the publishing pipeline — would be a hectic one. And after 15 years of collaboration, they wanted to commemorate it with a Princeton retreat (and matching sweatshirts, orchestrated by Lavelle). During the retreat, Holder described walking by 185 Nassau, where he, Hankin, and Bischoff once worked on their theater theses, and reflected on how far they had all come. “Certain dreams that we all had [have] come true,” Holder says, and even “dreams that we didn’t even know we had” have materialized.

Some of those dreams have taken surprising turns. In July 2025, Hankin visited Lavelle at her home in Ridgewood, New Jersey. Coincidentally, that was the filming location for Hankin’s screenplay *Don’t Say Good Luck*, which she revised and developed in the writing group, in production as a forthcoming Netflix film. “Lovell actually was one of the first people who read that screenplay years

## Princeton Writers Group Books

### SWEET FURY

Sash Bischoff ’09

In this thought-provoking novel that plays with F. Scott Fitzgerald 1917’s body



of work, readers meet beloved actress Lila Crayne. She’s newly engaged to renowned filmmaker Kurt Royall and playing the lead role in a feminist adaptation of Fitzgerald’s *Tender*

*is the Night*. But something is off. She begins sessions with a therapist, Jonah Gabriel, to unpack her past, but their sessions bring a dark secret to life.

### ONE-STAR ROMANCE

Laura Hankin ’10

Natalie and Rob hate each other. Natalie is a struggling writer and Rob is an



academic. The problem is Rob gave Natalie’s book a one-star review, and she discovers this minutes before the pair have to walk down the aisle together for their best friends’ wedding.

Throughout this charming and humorous novel, readers get to see Natalie and Rob grow and evolve into their 30s, and eventually grow closer.

### THE BOOK OF LUKE

Lovell Holder ’09

In his 20s, Luke Griffin was a contestant on the reality show *Endeavor*. The experience ends in tragedy and changes his life and those of his fellow contestants forever. A decade later, Luke is a stay-at-home dad married to the only openly gay senator in

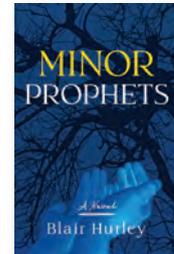


America. When his husband’s cheating scandal comes to light, Luke rejoins *Endeavor* in hopes of winning the million-dollar prize, but has to confront the truth of what happened the first time he was on the show.

### MINOR PROPHETS

Blair Hurley ’09

Raised in the remote wilderness of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula as the



daughter of a cult leader, Nora begins to question everything. The novel takes readers on a journey through devotion, emotion, and abuse. Through flashbacks and prose, the book

conveys the agonizing conflict Nora experiences as she attempts to break away from her father’s influence.

### AFTERTASTE

Daria Lavelle ’09

At age 10, Konstantin Duhovny lost his father and discovered he had an odd gift:



Konstantin could taste the favorite foods of the ghosts around him. For decades he kept this a secret, until he decides to use his talents for good. Konstantin reunites

people with their deceased loved ones and offers them closure by preparing a dish for them to share.

ago and kept me from giving up on it,” Hankin says. “The film and TV world is so discouraging — I got my hopes up and I got my hopes dashed for many years on that one and Lovell was always a very steady force.”

Bischoff says the group has taken on

a life of its own, even as respective life events — moves, marriages, and children — have added to and enriched each of their lives. “I have had the pleasure of knowing each of these writers for literally 20 years. We know one another’s writing almost better than anybody else.” ■



MADELEINE HADDON \*21

# Rebel, Rebel Reintroduced

BY MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83

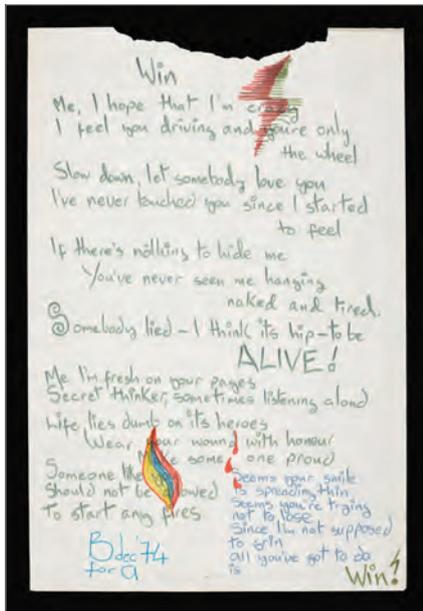
**D**AVID BOWIE MIGHT HAVE been one of the most innovative musical performers of the last 60 years, but to younger audiences, he can seem as unfamiliar — and as relevant — as Perry Como. Madeleine Haddon \*21 hopes to change that.

Haddon is a senior curator of the David Bowie Centre at the newly opened Victoria & Albert (V&A) East Storehouse in London. “There’s so much for people to get excited about when it comes to Bowie,” she says. “When we think about young people today wanting to be creatives, he is the original creative in all senses of the word.”

A singer and songwriter known for such hits as “Space Oddity” and “Fame,” Bowie was also a painter, actor, set designer, and costume designer whose androgynous stage persona, Ziggy Stardust, challenged conventions around gender identity in the early ’70s. An early adopter of

technological innovations, he was also one of the first major artists to release an album online, create his own website, and use chat rooms to engage with fans.

Bowie donated several hundred pieces of memorabilia to the V&A before his



**ON DISPLAY**

*David Bowie performing on the Ziggy Stardust tour, 1973. Below, handwritten lyrics from the song “Win” from the album Young Americans.*

death in 2016 at the age of 69; a collection of his artifacts toured the world for several years. In 2023, the museum acquired the rest of Bowie’s archives, more than 90,000 items including instruments, gold records, costumes, original lyric sheets, photographs, and correspondence. Even Bowie’s work desk. It needed to build a space to hold it all.

Cue the Bowie Centre, which opened on Sept. 13 as part of the new V&A location in East London. Haddon says it is unlike any museum visitors have ever seen.

In addition to viewing thousands of items on display, visitors can look up any item in the museum’s online catalog and have it brought to them personally to view and, in many cases, touch.

That includes anything from a 1975 Bowie guitar to a pair of eighth-century Egyptian shoes or a 19th-century throne belonging to the maharaja of the Sikh empire. No reason is needed to request an object, and no expertise is required, although if something is too old or fragile, visitors may be asked to wear gloves or look rather than touch. The service, known as Order an Object, is also free, although visitors should make an appointment.

“If it’s a small enough object, we’ll bring it to you in a study room,” Haddon explains. “If it’s a very large object, we’ll take you to it. The whole idea is to give the collection back to the people, where it belongs.”

**After attending Yale, where she** majored in art history and worked as a curatorial assistant, Haddon earned her Ph.D. at Princeton, writing her dissertation on race and gender in 19th- and 20th-century Spanish, French, and American painting. She later worked as an independent curator in London. Haddon has since curated exhibitions at the Hispanic Society Museum and Library of New York and a Matisse exhibition at the Museum



HADDON \*21

MICK ROCK 1973 / ESTATE OF MICK ROCK 2025; THE DAVID BOWIE ARCHIVE™. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE V&A.

of Modern Art in New York before joining the V&A in October 2022.

The V&A Storehouse East is the latest branch of the Victoria & Albert Museum, which boasts one of the largest collections of applied and decorative arts in the world. It contains 250,000 exhibits over 172,000 square feet of exhibition space, the equivalent of 38 full-size basketball courts. A profile on CNN.com described it as “akin to a big, artisanal IKEA.” Among many highlights, the V&A Storehouse East includes the Kaufman Office, designed in the 1930s by Frank Lloyd Wright and the only complete Wright interior on display outside the United States. Also on permanent exhibition are a 15th-century gilded wood ceiling from Spain and Picasso’s huge 34-by-38-foot backdrop for the ballet *Le Train Bleu*, painted in 1924.

Haddon is one of five curators at the V&A East Storehouse and the V&A East Museum, which will open next door in April and focus on contemporary art. She is leading the artist commissions program and helping to develop the new museum’s permanent galleries, as well as leading a research project on the global history of Carnival.

Objects at the V&A East Museum will be displayed thematically rather than by location or period. For example, Nigerian American artist Kehinde Wiley’s 2019 *Portrait of Melissa Thompson*, depicting a young woman from East London, will be hung alongside a 16th-century self-portrait by Sofonisba Anguissola, one of the best-known female artists of the Italian Renaissance. The goal, Haddon says, is “taking objects from disparate geographies and moments in time and placing them in dialogue with each other.”

When she was a girl, Haddon says her parents often took her to museums around New York City, which inspired her to become a curator. However, she saw few other patrons who were persons of color, like her. Now that she has the opportunity, she is determined to address that.

Museums tell of our shared human history, Haddon says, “and as a scholar and as a curator, I’ve dedicated my work to bringing those to life.” ■



### TIGER TRAVELS

## How to Take Your Kids Overseas For a Family ‘Study Abroad’

BY KATHARINE GAMMON '03

**L**IKE MANY MILLENNIAL PARENTS, my husband and I were itching to find a way to expose our kids to the broader world. Last year, we took that leap: We unenrolled our second and fourth graders from their public school in Santa Monica, California, and hit the road.

We had looked at placing the kids in an international school in Europe, but many of the schools wanted a year’s commitment. Through a friend, we heard about Boundless Life,

a program that drops families into cities to “live like a local” for three months — the maximum time Americans are allowed in the EU without a visa — and includes school, a coworking hub,

and community experiences. We signed up to do a program in Italy, with the hopes that we could use it as a jumping-off point to explore the rest of Europe. We extended our trip by living in Bali for a month before Europe.

We lived in Pistoia, a small Tuscan town just outside Florence. My fourth grader had staunchly resisted leaving home, but as soon as we arrived and he went to one day at Boundless’ education center, he admitted, “Mom, I was wrong. This place

was awesome.” It was a new experience for all of us. Since we worked U.S. hours, we could explore in the morning. When the kids tumbled out of school around 3 p.m., we would wander the piazzas and eat gelato on the way back to our apartment. We made friends with other Boundless parents, instantly bonded by this unique shared experience.

During our three months in Pistoia we were able to take advantage of trains and

short-hop flights around Europe to extend the history the kids were living in at our medieval, walled town. Not only did we leave with a sense of local culture and a love for la dolce vita (the sweet life), we

### ENDLESS EXPLORATION

*Katharine Gammon '03 moved to Pistoia, a small Tuscan town just outside of Florence, Italy, with her family for three months. Gammon's children look for birds in a rice paddy on a nature walk outside of Ubud, Bali.*

also gained a real chance to connect as a family — and spend time exploring slowly together.

We are already dreaming of going to Greece and learning about history on our next foray. Now back in our home in California, the kids talk about Michaelangelo and Italian history as easily as Minecraft. ■



**READ** an extended version of this story online at [paw.princeton.edu](http://paw.princeton.edu).

# CLASS NOTES

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# MEMORIALS



## LISTEN TO OUR MEMORIALS PAWCAST

Visit [paw.princeton.edu/podcasts](http://paw.princeton.edu/podcasts) to hear a podcast discussion where we reminisce about an alum who recently died.

### THE CLASS OF 1943

#### CLYDE B. LAMP JR. '43

Clyde died Nov. 4, 2024, at the age of 103.

He came to Princeton from Shady Side Academy as a pre-med student and left after his junior year to go to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. It being wartime, his studies there were also accelerated, and he earned a medical degree in June 1945.

Following an internship at Mercy Hospital, he served as a captain in the Army Medical Corps for two years, stationed in the Philippines. Stateside, he was appointed to Richland General Hospital, serving the Hanford Project. He obtained further training as a fellow in otolaryngology at the Mayo Clinic and received an M.S. from the University of Minnesota. From 1953 until retirement in 1992, Lampie served patients in his private practice in Pittsburgh, while also teaching as a clinical associate professor of otolaryngology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

In his 32 years of retirement, Clyde enjoyed working in his yard, watching deer and other wildlife from his porch, reading, wintering with family in Sarasota, Fla., and playing Scrabble. Clyde was a master mason and a member of the Charleoi-Monongahela Lodge for 81 years, a member of the Masons' Scottish Rite for 25 years, and a Shriner. He had many fond memories of Princeton, particularly of encountering Albert Einstein and of going on tour with the Princeton Glee Club.

Clyde was predeceased by his wife of 66 years, Jean, whom he met on a blind date for a dance at her college (Pennsylvania College for Women '43) while he was in medical school. He is survived by their two children, C. Benjamin III and Jere.

### THE CLASS OF 1949

#### STEWART SCOTT GALT '49

Stewart died Jan. 8, 2024, in Somerset, N.J.

He grew up in Ferguson, Mo., the youngest of four brothers. Throughout his life he spent summers at a family cottage on Lake Michigan in Macatawa, Mich. Stewart came to Princeton from St. Louis Country Day School and earned his degree in U.S. and modern European history in



1950; he was a member of Whig-Clio and Prospect Club. After graduating he served four years in Air Force Intelligence, where he continued Russian language

studies begun at Princeton with a year of intensive study at Syracuse University. While stationed in Germany, he met his future wife, Liliane Sommer, of Bern, Switzerland; they married in 1954. Liliane died in 2014.

Stewart had a successful career as an international businessman, working for 39 years in the export department and later sales department of Simmons Mattress Co., including in Cuba during the Cuban revolution.

Known for his kindness, keen wit, and extensive family genealogy work, Stewart was a devoted husband and father, an avid bridge player, skier, pianist, a proud Princeton alumnus, linguist, world traveler, and reader of history, fiction, *The New York Times*, and the *Princeton Alumni Weekly*. When he moved back to New Jersey in 1980, he returned frequently to campus as a season-ticket holder to McCarter Theatre.

Stewart is survived by sons Stephan, Fritz, and James; their wives; five grandchildren; and a great-granddaughter.

### THE CLASS OF 1951

#### WESLEY WRIGHT JR. '51

Wes graduated from the Lawrenceville School before heading to Princeton and



earned a degree in chemistry with honors. A member of Elm Club, he roomed with Dick Swain and Matt Werth and shared labs with John David.

After graduation, he served in the Navy and then earned a master's degree in chemical engineering from MIT. After a brief stint at DuPont, he joined his father-in-law, Henry Clay Hofheimer II, in his concrete business, Southern Materials. Together, they collaborated successfully for decades in residential and commercial construction in Virginia.

Wes was a tireless alumni volunteer. He first volunteered for the Schools Committee, then for Annual Giving, and later in regional

and class affairs. He served as chair of the Alumni Council from 1981 to 1983 and class president from 1985 to 1991. In recognition for his contributions, he received the Harold H. Helm '20 Distinguished Service Award in 1995 and the Alumni Council Service to Princeton Award in 2014. Beyond the University, he applied his fundraising and leadership skills to a host of nonprofits and had a second career of service for more than 30 years.

Wes died Sept. 8, 2025, peacefully at home with his family by his side. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Elise; his children Elise '83 (Sarah) and Wesley '90 (Melissa); and his grandsons Wesley and Alistair '27.

### THE CLASS OF 1952

#### JOHN DOUGLAS C. BARR '52

Doug came to Princeton from the Hun School. He joined Cottage and majored in



English. He left senior year to join the Air Force. He was commissioned and flew as a fighter pilot over Iceland until 1957, when he returned to graduate that year from

Princeton. He then earned a law degree from Loyola School of Law in Los Angeles and practiced criminal law. He became a country lawyer in a small California town and later founded with his second wife, Dianne, a photography studio. Pairing photography with flying, they captured previously unrecorded Northern California beauty.

Doug died Nov. 13, 2024. He is survived by Dianne and 10 children, to whom the class sends its good wishes.

### ALVIN D. BENJAMIN '52

Alvin came to us from Liberty (N.Y.) High School. He majored in biology and ate at



Elm. He joined the Pre-Med Society and roomed with Ed Burka, George Tangen, and Geoff Nunes.

Alvin graduated from Yale Medical School, then served two years in the Navy. He practiced medicine in Los Altos, then retired to San Francisco.

Alvin died July 12, 2025. He is survived by his wife, Genene, and their children, Robert '86 and Amy '88. The class extends its condolences.

### ROBERT M. JEFFERS '52

Bob came to us from East High School in Denver.



After Princeton, he took a year at the University of Oslo, then earned an LL.B. from Columbia Law School in 1953.

He was a partner in the firm of Hogan & Hartson in Washington, D.C., retiring in 1998.

Bob died Oct. 20, 2024. He is survived by

his children, Robert and Susan, to whom the class sends good wishes.

#### THOMAS H. MELOHN '52

Tom came to us from the Lawrenceville School. At Princeton, he majored in history, joined Cap and Gown, and was advertising manager for the *Princeton Tiger*.



After serving in the Navy, he held several executive positions in Leo Burnett Advertising, Pet Inc., Swift, and other firms, eventually becoming president and owner of North American Tool and Die.

Tom died Aug. 15, 2024. He is survived by his wife, Holly, and their children, Laura, Sara, Sue, and Tom. To them the class offers condolences.

#### WALTER G. O'LEARY '52

Walt came to us from the Lawrenceville School and majored in modern languages.



He joined Key and Seal. After graduation and two years in the Army, he got an MBA from Wharton.

His career in international business included Colgate Palmolive from 1959 to 1975 and then, until 1992, at Sterling Drug Co.

Walt died June 26, 2025. He is survived by his wife, Anna Maria, and son, Walter, Jr. to whom the class sends its good wishes.

#### WILLEM F. VAN EEKELEN '52

Wim came to us from graduation at Utrecht Municipal Gymnasium in the Netherlands in



1951. He studied government and joined Key and Seal. He roomed with Tom Matter and Jay Master.

He earned a bachelor of law degree from the University of Utrecht in 1964.

Wim had a distinguished career in the Netherlands foreign service: from 1988 to 1994 as secretary general, Western European Union; from 1986 to 1988 as minister of defense, Western European Union; and from 1996 as a senator in the Netherlands Parliament. Francois Mitterand awarded him the Legion d'Honneur.

Wim died June 25, 2025. He is survived by his wife, Johanna, and their daughter, Annemargreeth. The class offers its salute for Willem's remarkable life of service to his country and its European allies.

#### HARRY E. WILKINSON JR. '52

Harry came to us from Richmond Heights (Mo.) High School. After Princeton, Harry did service in the Navy, then got an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis in 1957 and a D.B.A. from Harvard in 1960.

He worked as a Bell Systems engineer from



1954 to 1960, then as a project manager at Hartridge House from 1961 to 1965. From 1965 to 1967, he was dean of the College of Business at Northeastern.

From 1967 to 1990, he was CEO of University Affiliates, then joined the faculty of Rice University as professor of management until 2000.

Harry died June 1, 2025. He is survived by his wife, Sara Beth, and their children, Linda and Cheryl, to whom the class sends its best.

#### THE CLASS OF 1954

##### FRED J. FISHER '54

Fred died April 11, 2025, at Fisher Vineyards, which he established in the 1970s.



He prepared at Portsmouth Priory (later Portsmouth Abbey) School in Rhode Island, and was active in basketball, tennis, and publications. At Princeton,

Fred majored in basic engineering, joined Tiger Inn, and participated in interdormitory and interclub athletics. He earned an MBA at Harvard in 1956 and served as an officer in the Army from 1956 to 1959. Thereafter followed autos (as might have been expected given his family background), electronics, management consulting, container leasing, and in his words "finally at the age of 40, bingo! That is, vineyards and then marriage to Juelle July 12, 1975."

Fred purchased his first Napa Valley property in 1973. The firm is now family-run, with son, Robert, as CEO, and daughters Whitney overseeing the vineyards and production and Cameron heading up marketing and hospitality. Juelle founded Sonoma Country Day School, a K-8 independent school, which all three children attended.

The products of Fisher Vineyards have pleased the palates of discerning wine connoisseurs nationally, and most particularly of the members of the Class of 1954, who appreciated Fred's generous donations for major reunions.

Fred is survived by his wife of 50 years, Juelle; their daughters, Whitney '98 and Cameron; and son Robert.

##### JAMES M. HEATH '54 \*64

Jim died June 2, 2025.

Born in England, he prepared at Priory School in Surrey, and at Jamaica High School on Long Island, N.Y., where he was active in publications.



Jim majored in classics and wrote his senior thesis on the Roman general and politician Catiline. He was a member of Cloister Inn.

While serving for two years in the Army,

he became a citizen of the United States and Puerto Rico. He then earned an M.A. and a Ph.D. in classics at Princeton in 1964 while teaching at Kenyon College and Rice University. Jim married Ann Wilson in 1965.

He began teaching classics at Bucknell in 1966, chaired the department for 20 years, and retired in 1997. He is remembered as a gracious colleague and was beloved by his students. He loved golf, sweet treats, and word play, putting English phrases and mottos into classical Latin.

In retirement he became active as a lay person in the Episcopal Church, helping congregations in the transition between pastors. He and Ann enjoyed extensive travel in England, Scotland, and Italy, and were competitive bridge players. Ann died in 2018.

Jim is survived by his son, Andrew; daughters, Sarah and Martha; and two grandchildren, Olivia and Ian.

#### THE CLASS OF 1955

##### JERROLD R. BLAUW '55

Jerry, whose life was marked by hard work and an enduring curiosity about the world



— he had visited all 50 U.S. states plus the Eastern and Western Caribbean — died Feb. 22, 2025.

He was born Sept. 9, 1933, in Kansas City, Mo., and attended Southwest High School in Kansas City, where he was active in student government, journalism, sports, and the literary society. At Princeton, he joined Elm Club and majored in economics. He participated in freshman and varsity track, was associated with Whig-Clio, and graduated with honors. Senior year he roomed with Doug Gilmore.

After graduation, Jerry worked with the building products division of Boise Cascade Corp., then was vice president, marketing and sales for U.S. Fiber Corp., where he helped build the company into the world's largest manufacturer of cellulose insulation. When the company was sold in 1992, Jerry retired.

After retirement, Jerry indulged his love for reading the *Wall Street Journal* every day plus *Barron's*, giving him a firm grasp on the stock market right up to just before he died. In addition to finance, Jerry loved just about every genre: nonfiction, politics, autobiographies, mystery, suspense, and gleanings from *The New York Times* bestsellers list. He loved playing bridge plus an occasional game of golf and tennis and was a lifelong sports fan, especially devoted to the Kansas City Chiefs.

Jerry is survived by his wife of nearly 65 years, Nancy; daughters Elisabeth Dagenhardt and Gail Frances Blauw; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. All will miss his legacy of love, curiosity, and dedication.

### HAROLD B. ELSASSER '55

Hal, a bridge engineer and construction manager, whose jobs included the



Verrazzano Bridge in New York and the New River Gorge Bridge in West Virginia, died Nov. 3, 2025.

He was born Nov. 3, 1933, in Mt. Pleasant, N.Y., attended Princeton Country Day School through the eighth grade, then Exeter for one year, and graduated from the Lawrenceville School, where he was active in sports, dramatics and the glee club. At Princeton, he joined Elm Club and majored in civil engineering. He won numerals in freshman soccer and hockey and a secondary "P" in varsity soccer. Senior year he roomed with George Douglas and Roger Barron.

After Princeton Hal served two years in the Navy. While his ship was in dry dock at the Boston Navy Yard he met Sandra Gale, a nursing student at Boston College, and they were married April 12, 1958.

Hal began his long and successful career in 1959 in Greenland with the American bridge division of USX Corp. He worked with them in the States through 1986, when USX dissolved the bridge division. He continued with other major consulting work until his retirement, often offering the thought that "each day is another day in which to excel." Hal sang in the choir of the United Presbyterian Church for more than 50 years until he converted to his wife's Roman Catholic Church in 2018. As his confirmation name he chose Joseph, the patron saint of engineers.

Hal is survived by his wife of 67 years, Sandra; daughters Gretchen Medich, Mary-Ruth Keough, Nancy Keiser, and Tricia Berger; and 15 grandchildren. He was predeceased by his infant son Erik.

### LEWIS F. FARGO '55

Lew, a veteran resident of the Delaware shore, died Oct. 9, 2025, after a lifelong



struggle with bipolar illness.

He was born April 19, 1933, in Denver and attended the Lawrenceville School, where he participated in

basketball and publications and was a member of the cross-country team that won the state championship in his senior year. At Princeton, he joined Dial Lodge and majored in engineering. He participated in IAA track and was a member of A.S.C.E., the Republican Club, and the Canterbury Club. His senior-year roommate was Lawrenceville classmate Steve Bowes.

After Princeton, Lew earned an MBA from New York University. He began his career in New York with W.R. Grace & Co., a sewing supply company. He then worked for a

succession of small businesses, including those in resorts and steel. In 1964, he and Lois were married, then in 1988 his employer Lebanon Steel left the business. He and Lois moved to Ocean View, a small town on the Delaware shore near Cape Henlopen State Park. Lew purchased a small printing company that became Coastal Printing & Graphics in partnership with his son, Lance.

For years Lew had a succession of field trial dogs, and he loved to swim in the ocean off the state park.

Lew's memorial service in Bethany Beach, Del., featured some of his favored music, notably Frank Sinatra's "My Way," and Lew's favorite foods: pizza, cake, ice cream, and Milky Ways. Lew is survived by Lance and his wife Lois of 61 years, who spoke movingly of overcoming the challenges of Lew's bipolar illness.

### EDWARD L. SAWYER JR. '55

Ted, a corporate banker who loved to race Dragon one-design sailboats at a high level well into his 80s, died Oct. 25, 2025.



He was born July 5, 1933, in Boston and attended Milton Academy, where he participated in football,

wrestling, debating, and tennis. At Princeton, he majored in history and joined Cap and Gown. He engaged in freshman and varsity wrestling and was a member of the Undergraduate Council Staff, solicited for the Campus Fund Drive, and played IAA football and tennis. Senior year he lived at Cap and Gown.

Ted began his career in investment banking in New York City. There he met his wife, the late Dorothy Massie, moved to Cleveland, and established his own firm, The Edgewater Group, specializing in corporate finance, mergers, and acquisitions. He and Dorothy were divorced, and he then met and married his second wife, Clare Fooshee, with whom he shared a life rich with travel and a shared appreciation for literature, art, and culture. Ted was known for his hearty laugh and thoughtful advice, his intellect and generosity. Ted was most proud of his family, especially the accomplishments of his grandchildren.

Sailing was a lifelong passion for Ted, who was never far from the water. He always prioritized summers on Cape Cod, a cherished family tradition. Being on the water brought Ted immense joy. Among fellow sailors he was admired for his intuition on the water and his tactical acumen.

Ted is survived by his wife, Clare; son Alexander; daughter-in-law Marlyse; and stepchildren Nat Childres and Chris Childres and his wife, Vicky. Ted was predeceased by his brother David.

### FREDERIC W. THOMAS '55

Fritz, remembered for his wry humor and keen intellect, died at home in Bethlehem, Pa., Nov. 1, 2025.



He was born Nov. 4, 1933, in Allentown, Pa. Before Princeton, he graduated from the Lawrenceville School, where he participated

in publications, band, and was a sports manager. At Princeton, he majored in politics, joined the Key and Seal Club, and during senior year roomed with John Coogan and Bob McCulloch.

After graduation Fritz served as a lieutenant in the Army, posted in Germany. Back in Bethlehem he spent a career in small business ownership. Fritz was a longtime member of the Saucon Valley Country Club and a strong supporter of The Bach Choir, Historic Bethlehem, and Moravian Academy. When not listening to and singing along with his favorite opera arias or cheering on the Philadelphia Phillies and Eagles, he reveled in meticulously crafting model airplanes and then flying them alongside a community of fellow enthusiasts.

Fritz is survived by his wife of 62 years, Judith; children Lucy Thomas and Fritz Jr.; and three grandchildren.

### CHARLES A. WARDER '55

Chuck died Oct. 1, 2025, in Greenville, S.C.



He was born May 14, 1933, in Akron, Ohio, and attended Garfield High School, where he participated in student government, dramatics, debating, and was a member of the National Honor Society. At Princeton,

he joined Campus Club and majored in Asian languages. He was a member of the Freshman and Varsity Glee Club and senior year roomed with Doug Scott.

After Princeton, Chuck spent two years in the Army, serving in Berlin on the U.S. military mission to the Soviet Army. Subsequently he attended Harvard Business School, graduating in 1960. He had several jobs in New York City in the 1960s, later joining Coats & Clark, the sewing products company, where he was vice president and treasurer for 25 years. The company moved its headquarters to Greenville and Chuck decided to retire.

He was pleasantly surprised by the change, especially its nudge to travel. At one point he had made 14 transatlantic ship crossings, 13 on the QE2. On one trip he traveled to Berlin and was pleased to see the progress the city had made in 45 years.

Chuck's later years were comfortably spent at the Cascades Verdae Retirement Community in Greenville. He is survived by his partner of 56 years, Michael Comer; sister

Nancy Harwood; brother Lawrence; and several nieces and nephews.

### THE CLASS OF 1956

#### RICHARD B. CLUTZ '56

Dick died Oct. 15, 2022, at his home in Lebanon, N.H., after a prolonged illness.



Born in Trenton, N.J., he came to Princeton from the Mercersburg Academy, where he was active in wrestling and soccer. Dick joined Cloister Inn, majored in chemistry, and participated in IAA football, softball, and ice hockey. He then earned a medical degree from Columbia in 1960. Marriage to Robin Hunter of Barrington, R.I., and service as a medical officer in the United States Navy followed as a squadron surgeon in the Mediterranean.

Williamstown, Mass., become their long-term home, where Dick became a surgeon at North Adams Hospital, clinician at Williamstown Medical Associates, and consultant in surgery to Williams College (which gave him status to play for the Williams College faculty ice hockey team). Before and after his retirement in 2000, Dick was an avid outdoorsman, especially skiing and hunting, along with a strong interest in history, especially the Civil War and the two World Wars.

Robin and Dick raised one son, Andrew (Annie), and two daughters, Susannah Stewart (Jesse) and Carolyn Keeney (Mark) — all survive him as does his wife and six grandchildren. He was predeceased by two brothers, John '52 and Christopher '58.

### THE CLASS OF 1957

#### LEE A. BERTHELSEN '57

Lee died Oct. 9, 2025, in Milwaukee. He came to Princeton from St. Mark's School,



where he excelled in academics and baseball, playing semi-professionally while not attending school. At Princeton, he majored in French. Receiving a full scholarship, he also served as a waiter in Commons. He joined Terrace Club, spent time as a research assistant in the modern languages department, and spent vacation time working for the Waldorf Astoria in New York, his hometown.

After graduating with honors, Lee continued in the hotel business, first with the Waldorf and then with Hilton, Loew's, and Holiday Inn, in all of which he held increasingly important management positions. With Holiday Inn he became a corporate vice president and managing director of operations in Europe, Africa, and the Mideast. He then became president of Villacentres Ltd. in Canada, managing both hotels and nursing homes, and then a board

member and chairman of Preferred Hotels. After engineering the sale of Villacentres, he became president of Marcus Hotels in Wisconsin, overseeing the renovation of the historic Pfister Hotel and the purchase and renovation of the Americana Resort in Lake Geneva, Wis.

Lee married Carla, and then Harriet Whittemore, and after her death he married Bridgette. Retiring in 2001, Lee spent time visiting relatives, and painting, and was noted for singing, often some operatic tunes like Mario Lanza, his favorite performer. He is survived by Bridgette; children Lee, Kevin, and Michele; and stepchild Carole.

### PAUL P. GWYN '57

Described by his family as "a small-town boy from the foothills of North Carolina,"



Paul became a path-setting plastic surgeon. He died Oct. 13, 2025, in Winston-Salem, N.C. Paul came to Princeton from Woodberry Forest, with a scholarship from Chatham Manufacturing Co. He majored in chemistry, sang in the Chapel Choir and the Glee Club, served on Orange Key, and joined Elm Club. Senior year he roomed with Jack Bittig, Bill Booker, Fred Greear, and Jim McCutchan.

Following graduation Paul earned a medical degree from Columbia and did his internship at Duke, where he met and married a nursing student, Nancy Byrant Hooper. His medical studies were interrupted by service in the Air Force, where he attained the rank of captain. Thereafter he was involved in a general surgery residency at North Carolina Baptist Hospital. Having spent time doing plastic surgery in Liberia during his time at Columbia, Paul embarked on a career as a plastic surgeon in Winston-Salem, establishing Forsyth Plastic Surgical Associates and serving as president of that firm and of many plastic surgery societies until he retired. He received numerous honors during his career and founded Physicians for Peace in the 1980s.

After retirement, he spent time as a photojournalist, traveling the world with his wife and his children and grandchildren, as well as many hours at a vacation home in Duck, near Kitty Hawk, N.C.

Paul is survived by his wife of 62 years, Nancy; their three children, David, Kelly, and Marya; and their families.

### JOHN J.K. TAN '57

Rated five-star by his patients, Joon died June 2, 2025, in Clifton, N.J.

A native of Singapore, he came to Princeton from St. Joseph's Institute. He roomed with Win Munro, but left after a few weeks, when, as Win said, he thought "he

had made a mistake in coming to Princeton." Later Joon anglicized his name to John and graduated from Albert Einstein School of Medicine at Yeshiva University.

After serving his residency at Rutgers Health/New Jersey School of Medicine and time as a resident and intern at Hackensack Meridian Mountainside Hospital, John became a noted ear-nose-throat otolaryngologist in Montclair, N.J. He kept in touch with Princeton, giving brief biographical information in many of our Reunions yearbooks.

He married Janet after our 45th reunion and had one child, Allison, both of whom survive him.

### THE CLASS OF 1959

#### THOMAS H. BYRNES JR. '59

Tom died June 21, 2025, in his hometown of Thomasville, N.C.



He spent most of his life in North Carolina, graduating from Charlotte Central High School, where he was in the National Honor Society and choir. At Princeton, he majored in politics and sang in both the Glee Club and the Chapel Choir. He ate at Cloister and roomed with Randy Bigger, Robby Gardner, Rog Little, Charlie Murphy, and Charlie Stevenson.

Following Princeton, Tom attended Duke Medical School followed by five years with the Navy Medical Corps in Parris Island, S.C., Vietnam, San Diego, and Charleston. Upon release from active duty, he moved to Thomasville, where he practiced as an internist at Thomasville Medical Associates until his retirement in 1998.

Born with a talent for singing and acting, Tom joined local singing groups wherever he was, from the New Atlanta Singers to the Thomasville Chorale, to the Thomasville Players Theater group. He was an enthusiastic scuba diver and underwater photographer, as well as serving as an elder for his church, First Presbyterian of Thomasville.

Tom is survived by his wife of 41 years, Shirley; children Francis, Carol, Steven, and Beverly; and five grandchildren. He was predeceased by a son, Thomas III.

### CARL A. FAIRFIELD '59

Carl died Sept. 24, 2024, at his home in Ferndale, Calif.



Born in Oklahoma, Carl graduated top of his class at Tulsa Central High. At Princeton, he majored in psychology. He was secretary of the Oklahoma Club and participated in Orange Key. He ate his meals at Dial.

After graduation Carl served a tour of

sea duty in the Navy. One memory of his service was escorting Marine transport ships from Camp Pendleton to the Panama Canal during the Cuban Missile Crisis. After the Navy, Carl located to California. He earned a master's degree in family, child, and marriage counseling from the University of San Francisco. Carl was involved in a variety of socially oriented activities, including employment for some 20 years as director of the Humboldt Senior Resources Center. (Although he was from the oil patch in Oklahoma, a summer job requiring him to stir crude oil with his bare hands dissuaded him from that line of work.)

Carl married twice, first to Susan Krause and second, for more than 45 years, to Ruth Puckett. His two marriages blessed Carl with a daughter; five stepdaughters; and several grandchildren, with all of whom he maintained close relations over the years.

#### CHARLES J. HUDSON '59

Charlie Hudson died July 11, 2025, after a long illness.



Born in Oak Tree, N.J., he attended Highland Park High School, where he was president of his class, in the National Honor Society, and a star on the track team, becoming the New Jersey high school state mile champion in his junior year. At Princeton, he continued with track all four years. Elected captain of the cross-country team his senior year, he received the Rosengarten Cross Country Award for sportsmanship and performance. He majored in biology, was a member of Terrace, and roomed with David Huber.

Upon graduating Charlie married Dorothy Underwood and enrolled at McGill School of Medicine in Montreal. He then joined the U.S. Public Health Service and moved to Alaska, providing medical service throughout the state, often by bush plane. After several years the Hudsons moved to Cooperstown, N.Y., where they lived for 50 years. When he retired, Charlie was director of the geriatric program at the Capital District Psychiatric Center in Albany, N.Y.

Charlie was a man of unusual depth. Devoted to social justice, his interests were wide. He loved competitive snowshoe racing, fencing, biking, astronomy, Greek philosophy, and baroque music. He was a competitive swimmer into his 80s.

Charlie is survived by his wife of 66 years, Dorothy; three children; four grandchildren; and five great grandchildren.

#### ROGER E. LITTLE '59

Roger came to Princeton from McKinley Technical High School in Washington, D.C.,



graduating at the top of his class and receiving an award for excellence in scholarship.

A member of Court Club at Princeton, he majored in physics and sang in the Chapel Choir and the Glee Club. He roomed with Bigger, Byrnes, R. Gardner, Murphy, and Stevenson. Following graduation, he earned a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

Roger had a double career, first as a physicist and later becoming an actuary. He excelled in both areas. As a physicist he concentrated his work in superfluid liquid helium, teaching at Long Beach State and then at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. His career shift to actuary parlayed into a chief actuary position with Gulf Life Insurance Co. and its successor, American General. While at Georgia Tech, Roger began dating secretary Wynette (Winnie) Wright and in 1972 they married. A son, Jeffrey, followed in 1979.

Roger retired from his actuary career in 2002 but never stopped learning, taking classes in diverse subjects, from organic chemistry to astronomy. A traveler, he and Winnie visited 48 of our 50 states and several foreign countries.

Roger died Oct. 1, 2024. He is survived by Winnie; their son, Jeffrey; and two grandchildren.

#### THE CLASS OF 1960

##### JAMES A. HIRSCHY '60

Jim died July 5, 2024, at his home in Connecticut.



Born in Molokai, Hawaii, Jim and his family left just before Pearl Harbor; he grew up and attended Arsenal High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. After learning that

physics at Princeton was not as easy as at Arsenal, Jim decided to major in biology. He also served in Orange Key, joined the Pre-Med Society and dined at Key and Seal. He went on to Jefferson Medical School, earned a medical degree in 1964, interned there in 1965 and joined the Army Reserve. He retired as a captain in 1970 while doing his residency in radiology at New York-Cornell Medical Center.

Jim spent most of his career in private practice in radiology until joining a large group practice in New York in his later years. He loved life in New York: the Metropolitan Opera and the fellowship of the Opera Club, the New York City Ballet, several wine associations, access to Long Island beaches, and a country house in rural Connecticut for gardening, hunting, and skiing.

Jim is survived by his three children and their families, to whom we offer our sympathies.

#### JAMES A. WEISS '60

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Jimmy came to us from The Haverford School,



where he managed four varsity teams. At Princeton, he studied at Woodrow Wilson, dined at Key & Seal, and roomed with the Pyne Tower Suite entourage.

Jimmy earned his LL.B. at the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1963. After several years in general law practice, he went into independent real estate development in the Philadelphia area. He syndicated and renovated historic buildings there and later in Reading, Pa. He spent his entire career in real estate, from historic restorations to regional mall development. In later years he became general counsel to a large investment, development, and management firm. He never formally retired but gradually eased out of responsibilities and in about 2018 turned his full attention to his grandchildren.

After a failed first marriage, Jimmy remet and married Nancy, a high school friend. They shared a love of theater, especially musicals, music (jazz in Jimmy's case), and travel. New York and London for theater, a family retreat in Bozeman, Mont., and family here and abroad were frequent destinations.

Jimmy died Aug. 29, 2025, of complications of a stroke. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Nancy; daughter Susan, sons James '96 and Robert '99; and four grandchildren to whom the class sends condolences.

#### THE CLASS OF 1961

##### STEPHEN F. DANA III '61

Steve died Oct. 1, 2025, at home at the Knolls of Oxford in Oxford, Ohio.



Born in Cincinnati, he came to Princeton from Taft School. At Princeton, he majored in history, was a member of the Marching Band and Triangle, and took his meals at Terrace.

After Princeton Steve earned an M.A. at Yale before starting a career in teaching history at the secondary and college levels, alumni and development work, executive recruiting and, from the late 1970s on, citizen planning in and around Oxford, where he lived for most of his adult life. His obituary reports that he was a "colorful and vibrant member of the Oxford community."

Steve was predeceased by his wife, Prue. He is survived by his sister, Emilie Dana Bruell, and stepsons Ephraim and Erik Zimmerman.

#### THOMAS S. ELLIS III '61

Tim died at home in Keswick, Va., on July 30, 2025.



Born in Bogota, Colombia, he lived in several South American countries into his teens and came to Princeton from Greenwich High School in Connecticut. Attending Princeton on a full Navy ROTC scholarship, he majored in aeronautical engineering and took his meals at Tower Club. His roommates were Roger Morgan, Dar LaBarthe, and Carl Gustafson.

After six years as a naval aviator flying F-4 Phantom II fighters off aircraft carriers, Tim earned his LL.D. at Harvard Law School, graduating magna cum laude, followed by a Diploma in Law at Magdalen College, Oxford.

Then ensued several decades as a litigator with Hunton & Williams in Richmond, Va., where he earned the nickname "The Tasmanian Devil" in the legal community. In 1989, President Reagan appointed him United States federal district judge for the eastern district of Virginia, a court known as the "Rocket Docket" for its speedy adjudication rate under his guidance. He served the court with distinction until his retirement in 2024. This short memorial can't begin to do justice to his long judicial career.

Tim is survived by his wife of 30 years, Rebecca; sons Alexander '94 and Parrish; and three grandchildren.

#### SIDNEY J. FRIEDMAN '61

Sid died April 3, 2025, in Newton, Mass.



Born in Des Moines, Iowa, he came to us from Roosevelt High School. At Princeton, he majored in English under the Special Program in the Humanities, graduating *summa cum laude*. He was in Theatre Intime and Triangle and wrote movie reviews for *The Daily Princetonian*. A member of Terrace Club, he roomed with John Kremer, Nick MacNeil, Dave Hulett, Ben Bassett, Irwin Kuntz, Jim Raybin, Walt Schroeder, and John Brothers.

After Princeton Sid earned a master's degree and a Ph.D. at the University of Iowa in directing and dramatic theory respectively, then becoming a professor in the arts at Washington University in St. Louis, where he collaborated with classmate Richard Palmer in creating a new performing arts curriculum and theater. In 1981, he joined Boston University's School of Theater, where he taught and directed myriad plays. He was engaged in many other theater arts activities in Boston and nationally, such as adjudicating college plays, playwriting, acting, and directing summer stock. He retired in 2018.

Sid is survived by his wife of 62 years, Margo; daughter Lisa; son Mark; and their families, which include five grandchildren.

#### THE CLASS OF 1962

##### DAVID L. GRODE '62

Dave died July 16, 2025, in West Palm Beach, Fla.



He came to us from East Rockaway (N.Y.) High School, where he was active on the school newspaper, editor in chief of the yearbook, participated for the school service organization, sang in the chorus, and played in the school band. At Princeton, he majored in history, played trumpet in the Marching Band, was active in the Princeton Savoyards and the Hillel Foundation, and dined at Court Club.

After graduation, Dave had very limited contact with Princeton or our class. In our 25th-reunion yearbook, he indicated he was a physician in the Wilson Clinic, in Wilson, N.C., with a specialty in radiology. After retiring he moved to West Palm Beach, Fla.

#### ROBERT B. LAWLER '62

Bob died March 14, 2025, in Wayne, Pa.

He graduated from the Kent School and originally entered Princeton with the Class of 1960, attending for two years before leaving to serve in the Army. He returned to Princeton as a member of our class.

He left again, tried his hand on Wall Street and in retail before entering Columbia University to finish his undergraduate education and then to Villanova University Law School, graduating with honors in 1972. He then worked as a public defender, a special prosecutor and for the Philadelphia District Attorney, acting as the head of the homicide appeals office. Ultimately, he set up the private firm of Wilbraham, Lawler, and Buba.

He was active in his community, serving on the boards of several nonprofits. He enjoyed sports, playing tennis, squash, and racquetball.

In retirement, Bob and Mary, his wife of 57 years, enjoyed traveling all over the world, visiting every continent except Antarctica.

Bob is survived by Mary, sons Tim and Ben, and five grandchildren.

#### THE CLASS OF 1963

##### STEVEN C. KLAUSNER '63

Steve died Oct. 10, 2025, at his home in Greenwich, Conn. A native of Yonkers,



N.Y., he attended the Peddie School before coming to Princeton, where he majored in civil engineering.

In 1959, Steve, known also as "Klaus," was one of the founders of the a cappella group the Princeton Footnotes. Its aim was to create an organization focused on musical excellence and inclusivity on campus. Founding the Footnotes was one of Steve's

proudest achievements. He is particularly remembered for introducing rock 'n' roll to their repertoire and bringing outrageous, but crowd-pleasing choreography that distinguished the Footnotes from other groups at the time. Because Steve's health did not allow him to attend its 65th anniversary on campus, the Footnotes brought their music to his home to celebrate him and his legacy.

After Princeton, Steve earned a medical degree at NYU and served as an NCO doctor stationed in Korea. After an internship at the University of Chicago and residencies at Stanford University and UCSF, he became a research cardiologist at LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City and the chief of cardiology at the VA Hospital in Martinez, Calif.

Later in life, Steve got the chance to pursue his passion for architecture, attending the graduate program at Columbia University. Steve loved music, travel, and family, and was a lifelong generous supporter of Princeton, the Footnotes, and many Jewish causes.

Steve is survived by his partner, Eileen Simonson; son Josh '91; and his grandchildren, Jasper and Hayden.

#### THE CLASS OF 1964

##### FRANCIS C. EDMONDS III '64

Francis died Jan. 19, 2023, in Berlin, Germany, where he had been living since 1971.



Francis graduated from Friends Academy in Locust Valley, N.Y., and followed his father, Francis II '40, and maternal grandfather, Donald Barnhouse 1919, to Princeton, where he majored in mathematics, was a member of the Wilson Society and the Evangelical Fellowship, and in Glee Club. Francis was also active in Der Deutsche Verein, an organization providing for the intellectual, cultural, and social life of those of German ancestry. In college, he became interested in the Sturm und Drang period, a late 18th-century German literary movement focusing on works filled with rousing action and high emotionalism.

In 1967, Francis earned an M.S. in mathematics from Cornell, taught for a few years, and then moved to Berlin. Working for IBM Germany, he was responsible for ensuring its programs were being adequately analyzed and tested before release.

In 1994, he exchanged American for German citizenship and began work as a technical translator, a choice necessitated by age discrimination in Germany. Unhappy with mandatory retirement laws, he joined the Freedom Democratic Party (FDP) and became a committed campaigner against age discrimination, convinced that people, whatever their age, could make an important

contribution in their working life and afterward.

To his sister, Ruth Naylor, and other relatives, the class offers its condolences.

#### **JAMES W. HUNTER '64**

Jim died May 22, 2025.

Jim came to Princeton from Ashland (Ohio) High School, where he was valedictorian and active in football, wrestling, dramatics, and student government. At Princeton, he majored in English and joined Dial Lodge.

After Princeton, Jim moved to Shelby, Ohio, and began a 33-year career as a well-liked high school English teacher, pausing only to earn a master's degree in 1972 in school administration from Ohio State. In addition to his teaching, he served as the voice of the Shelby Whippets football team for more than 40 years.

A thespian at heart, Jim participated in community theater well into his 60s, wanting to share his love of the stage so much that he became director of Whippet Theater at Shelby High School, helping students find their voice and true selves.

In the late '90s, Jim and his wife, Louise, began working summers with their three daughters at Camp Mowana in Mansfield, Ohio, falling in love with the beauty of the camp and its people. He also became involved in local politics, serving as a councilman and then mayor. Jim's love of community helped create positive change and included the special bonus of officiating at weddings.

To Louise, his daughters Jennifer, Wendy, and Jaime, and their families, the class sends its condolences.

#### **ROBERT C. WHITE JR. '64**

Bob died Sept. 16, 2025, of complications from a paralyzing biking accident.



Coming to Princeton from the McDonogh School in Owing Mills, Md., Bob dined at Colonial and majored in electrical engineering. He (epee) and Bill Hicks '64 (foil) both became two-year All-Americans in fencing, together leading upstart Princeton to the 1964 NCAA title.

Bob earned his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from the University of Arizona in 1970, following that doing research and teaching at Arizona State University. In the 1990s, he moved to Sandia Park, N.M., where he worked for Verizon and married Pamela Heath.

After retiring, Bob took up bass guitar and woodworking, becoming an accomplished guitarist, playing with Pam, a pianist, in three different bands, and in his home

workshop becoming a skilled woodworker using only hand tools.

Bob loved the outdoors, enjoyed backpacking, hiking, bicycling, and working around their rural home. He was also an avid environmentalist, especially of the desert landscape in the Southwest.

Although Bob had a quiet demeanor, he had a wonderful sense of humor that came out through his delightful letters and interpersonal relationships. His probing mind had him constantly reading about new areas of interest.

Bob is survived by his wife, Pam; children Ian, Amy, Stephen, and Anthony; and seven grandchildren. He was exceptionally kind and generous and will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

#### **THE CLASS OF 1966**

##### **KENNETH A. BOURNE JR. '66**

Ken died Sept. 24, 2025, in Baltimore, where he was born and lived most of his life.



A graduate of the Gilman School, Ken entered Princeton with the Class of 1964, then joined our class after a two-year sabbatical.

As secretary of Tower Club, he lived in the clubhouse his senior year, along with fellow officers Jack Folts, Steve Harwood, and Dave Boetcher.

He spent his professional career in banking, serving Mercantile Bankshares as senior credit officer, chief financial officer, and executive vice president, then serving as president of PNC's Metropolitan Baltimore City division.

Ken was devoted to the Baltimore community, serving on the boards of Tissue Banks International, Midtown Development Corp., and Charlestown Retirement Community. He chaired Jubilee Baltimore and was a trustee of the Gilman School, Walters Art Museum, and Kennedy Krieger Institute.

He enjoyed golf and fishing and was a member of the Maryland Club and the Elkridge Club.

Ken is survived by his wife, Deborah; children Edward, Alison La Fiura, and Courtney Fox; several grandchildren; and sister, Caroline Davies. The class extends its condolences to all of them.

#### **THE CLASS OF 1969**

##### **OLUGBEMI S. OLUTIMAYIN '69 \*72**

Olu died Aug. 4, 2025, in Lagos, Nigeria. He was born in Nigeria, came to the United States for school, then returned to serve his country and raise his family.

At Titcombe High School, Olu was active in the choir and served as president of the student assembly. An anonymous missionary paid for his final exams and SATs and encouraged Olu to apply to Princeton.



He majored in aeronautical engineering and took part in the Trenton Tutorial Project, the Pan African Students Organization, and the Princeton Evangelical

Fellowship.

Following graduation, Olu worked for Shell-BP Development Co. in Nigeria. Deciding that was not for him, he returned to Princeton and earned a master's degree in structural engineering in 1972, and in 1976 his MS in architecture from Columbia. Returning once again to Africa, Olu worked in the Nigerian Civil Service and had several government appointments, including with the World Bank from 1989 to 1991. He later established a private architectural practice, and at the time of his death was chairman and CEO of Afmasco consulting and engineering contractors.

Olu's work took him to multiple locations in Nigeria, and wherever he went he joined a church and sang in the choir. He became involved in the lives of many people that he met and had a particular urge to help people who had been overlooked by society.

Olu's first wife, Mary, and his second wife, Janet, survive him, as do his children, Oluremilekun, Modupe, Olukayode, Oluseye, and Abosede; and his five grandchildren.

#### **JAMES F. SHUEY '69**

Jim died June 27, 2025, at home in Rochester, N.Y. He and Kathleen Hursh split their time



between Rochester, and Estes Park, Colo., where they enjoyed their "Dome Home."

Jim was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and graduated from Andover, where he was active in soccer, wrestling, and theater workshop. At Princeton, he majored in economics and worked as a research assistant in the economics department. This led to his first job as a management trainee in a Philadelphia bank, and in 1979, Jim earned a J.D. from Rutgers Newark Law School.

Over time, Jim became a highly regarded expert in business valuation, working for several firms and eventually starting Shuey Associates, from which he retired. Jim's work took him and his family for a very interesting stay in Budapest, Hungary, in the early 1990s. There he helped businesses modernize, privatize, and otherwise adjust to a competitive supply and demand world.

Jim was a collector at heart. He cataloged many things, including stamps, jokes, puns, and his own detailed list of wine and beer reviews. In retirement, Jim enjoyed a stint working as a tour guide and wine educator in New York's Finger Lakes wine region.

Jim is survived by Kathleen, who he married in 2010. He is also survived by his

children, Christine, Elizabeth, and Jonathan and their families; his stepsons, Asa and Austin and their families; and by his siblings, Janet, Charles, and Lucinda.

### THE CLASS OF 1970

#### MARK C. QUALE '70

Mark died Aug. 4, 2025, of complications of Alzheimer's at home. His journey from



Arizona to be with the class at our belated 50th in 2022 will stand as a symbol of our enduring bonds.

One of our huge group from New Trier High School, Mark sang there as he did everywhere, with us it was the Glee Club. Mark was a founding member of Stevenson Hall, and a pioneer in the Latin American studies program, where he wrote his thesis on "The Expropriation of the Oil Industry in Mexico." He went to Harvard Business School, then spent most of his career as a financial adviser, dealing with the myriad personal and family issues of the free enterprise system. He adored travel, visiting over 100 countries and soaking up the musical elements of each place. He continued his singing, for years with the Tempe Community Chorus, and his great interest in music, in which the Great American Songbook battled with rock 'n' roll. At his memorial service, there was singing and dancing, and the Four Seasons and Frank Sinatra both played their parts.

Mark is survived by his wife, Teresa; son Matthew '98; three grandchildren; brother Drew; and many nieces and nephews.

### THE CLASS OF 1979

#### STEVE SILLIMAN '79

Steve died March 31, 2025, from pancreatic cancer.



Following in the footsteps of his brother, Bill Silliman '75, Steve arrived at Old Nassau from Chicago. Steve studied civil engineering and found his métier in the field of

hydrology. He went on to earn his master's and doctorate degrees in water resources from the University of Arizona, where he met Julie, his wife of 40 years.

On campus, Steve played trumpet in the Princeton Jazz Ensemble and joined Charter Club. According to roommate Lew Gasorek, Steve was known to scale the interior walls of Princeton Inn, to the amazement of its denizens.

Through a Princeton connection, Steve became a professor of hydrology at Notre Dame, where his expertise in water resources led to international projects such as well drilling and water quality initiatives in Benin, West Africa. He published widely and received numerous teaching awards. After retiring from teaching, Steve served as dean

of engineering at Gonzaga and Trevecca Nazarene Universities.

Steve enjoyed family trips to Glacier and other national parks, often hiking with a child in his backpack.

The class extends heartfelt condolences to Julie; sons Carl, Scott, and Timothy; brother Bill; and sister Nancy.

### THE CLASS OF 1980

#### CHARLES R. HELMS '80

Chuck, died Nov. 2, 2025.

He was an extremely talented epee fencer



for coach Stan Seja's Tiger squad, was named All-Ivy three times, as well as

All-East and All-American once each. A Cottage Club member, he majored in comparative literature and focused on "Don Quixote." A devout Catholic, he participated in Princeton's Students for Conscientious Choice and C.S. Lewis Society.

After working in Alaska, he studied theology at the University of Dallas. In 1982, he married architect Rachel Elizabeth Landry.

Chuck earned a doctorate in divinity at Oxford, then studied law at the University of Texas, and wrote for the *Texas Law Review*. His longtime law partner was Paul Pesek. Chuck was president of the St. Thomas More Society (his local Catholic lawyers guild) and a member of the Catholic Bar Association. He later taught theology at the University of Dallas.

With co-author Bobby Zorn, he drafted a book about French war hero Daniel Nevot, his high school fencing instructor, *Strong at the Broken Places*. Expect publication in 2028.

During 42 years together, Chuck and Rachel raised five children: Nathaniel, John Henry, James, Rebecca, and Peter. They had three grandchildren.

### JONATHAN TODD WEBER '80

Todd died Nov. 13, 2024, in Atlanta during surgery to repair a broken clavicle sustained



in a bicycle accident two weeks earlier. He retired from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2021, concluding 32 years as a medical detective

fighting outbreaks of infectious diseases and combatting HIV/AIDS and COVID-19.

Warm and witty, Todd came to Princeton from Brooklyn Heights, N.Y., where he attended Saint Ann's School. At Princeton, he majored in English and wrote for *The Daily Princetonian*. His first passion was journalism. During an internship with investigative reporter Jack Anderson, Todd reported on women in Oregon who suffered miscarriages after being exposed to an herbicide containing dioxin. Todd caught the public health bug, bulked up on science

courses in his senior year, and attended a pre-med program at Columbia University, where he also earned a medical degree. He joined the Public Health Service and the Epidemic Intelligence Service — medical sleuths who tackled public health crises, developing tests and distributing life-saving information.

He is survived by his children, Bianca Maria and Carlo; and his sister, Suzanne Weber. Asked about the wisest words he'd ever heard, Todd said, "You're entitled to your own opinions, but not your own facts."

### THE CLASS OF 1982

#### ESTHER ZISA TAUBMAN '82

The loss of Esther saddens the Class of 1982. She graduated early from Ramaz High



School in New York and started college at Cornell University, then took a leave of absence in the spring of her freshman year to pursue Judaic-Hebraic studies

at Yeshiva University. She transferred to Princeton in 1980, joining our class as a sophomore. At Princeton, she reunited with schoolmates from Ramaz, one of whom remembered that "I have clear memories of Esther smiling and always being so kind and humble." Esther majored in religion and dined at Cloister Inn. She returned to New York after college.

Esther died Oct. 9, 2024.

### THE CLASS OF 1987

#### CATHERINE PAULEY JOHNSTON '87

Cathy died Sept. 16, 2025, near her family cottage in Harbor Beach, Mich., the result of



a cycling accident. She had a commitment to service, an unquenchable intellectual curiosity, and relentless enthusiasm.

Born in Taiwan, Cathy's East Asian childhood defined her professional journey. At Princeton, she sang with the Glee Club, joined Tower, majored in East Asian Studies, and met her husband, Wes Johnston '87. She attended Michigan and studied Chinese at Middlebury.

Cathy cherished singing in choral groups and belting out show tunes with her family during long car rides. An avid athlete, Cathy embraced cycling, triathlons, and golf trips with Wes. Living in Kailua, Hawaii, she delighted in hosting friends for trips to the beach, local hikes, the perfect farmer's market, and her beloved dog, Trixie.

Cathy dedicated more than 30 years to a career in intelligence, becoming a recognized expert on national security and East Asia. She traversed roles at CIA, DIA, DNI, and IndoPacific Command. Colleagues admired her sharp insight, strategic mind, and tireless dedication to national interests.

Cathy is survived by Wes; daughters Allegra and Aria; granddaughter Maia; her father, Joseph; and siblings Joe and Cecelia.

See more at <https://www.hstoday.us/industry/honoring-the-legacy-of-cathy-johnston-and-her-distinguished-career-in-national-security/>.

### GRADUATE ALUMNI

#### GEORGE WILLIAM GOWARD \*54

Bill died of natural causes Sept. 11, 2025, in Branford, Conn. He was 98.

Born May 31, 1927, in Chicago, during Bill's teenage years his family migrated to Alberta, Canada. He earned B.S. and M.S. in chemistry degrees from the University of Alberta in 1949 and 1951, and a Ph.D. in chemistry from Princeton in 1954.

After Princeton, Bill moved to Pittsburgh, where he worked for Westinghouse Corp. on the chemistry of nuclear fuels for the first nuclear-powered submarine, the Nautilus. In 1962, the family moved to Connecticut, where Bill worked at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in North Haven. Bill specialized in high-temperature coatings for jet and related engines. After many years at Pratt, he moved to Turbine Coatings Corp. in Branford, where he was vice president and chief scientist.

Bill was a member of the Society of Sigma X, the American Society of Materials, and the American Association for Advancement of Science. He had numerous technical publications and several patents.

Bill was predeceased by his wife of 70 years, Helene. He is survived by his children, Beverly, Kathleen, William, Janice, and James; seven grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

#### ADEL SAADA \*61

Tony died Nov. 2, 2025, in Shaker Heights, Ohio,

Born Oct. 24, 1934, in Heliopolis, Egypt, Tony graduated from Cairo University in 1955. He studied at Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures de Paris and the University of Grenoble, specializing in geotechnical engineering. He earned a Ph.D. in civil engineering from Princeton in 1961.

In 1962, Tony joined the faculty of Case Institute of Technology (now Case Western Reserve), working there for 60 years. Specializing in soil mechanics and foundation engineering, he built a program in geotechnical engineering and developed a teaching and research soils laboratory and equipment for testing hollow soil cylinders. The Saada Pneumatic Analog Computer (SPAC) was the first device to test soils in various synchronized combinations of stresses.

He published one of the first constitutive equations for anisotropic clay, and a textbook *Elasticity, Theory, and Applications*. Tony guided a joint U.S.-France research project on the behavior of granular

noncohesive soil. The geomechanics division of the National Science Foundation and French government ministries supported the creation of a database and the validation of numerous constitutive equations. The updated database is still used by researchers.

Predeceased by his wife, Nancy, Tony is survived by his children Christiane S. Blume '83 and Richard Saada '86; and grandchildren Nathaniel Blume, Catherine Blume '18, and Caroline and Steven Saada.

#### EDWARD NICHOLLS LEE \*64

Edward died July 21, 2025, at his home in Solana Beach, Calif. He was 90.

He was born April 1, 1935, in New York City. He received his B.A. from Cornell in 1956, then served as a lieutenant in the Army for two years. Edward earned his Ph.D. in philosophy from Princeton in 1964. With a scholarly interest in ancient Greek philosophy, he wrote his dissertation on "The Concept of the 'mage' in Plato's Metaphysics."

Edward taught at Johns Hopkins and the University of Texas, Austin, before moving in 1970 to the philosophy department at the University of California, San Diego, where he was a professor of ancient Greek philosophy, specializing in Plato and the pre-Socratics, until his retirement in 1994.

Edward is survived by his wife, Kathryn Ann Shevelow; daughters Sandra and Susanna; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

#### CHING-FENG CHANG \*76

A resident of Richmond, Texas, John died Oct. 9, 2025, in Rochester, Minn. He was 79 years old.

He was born May 16, 1946, in Changhua, Taiwan. After earning his B.S. in chemical engineering from Tunghai University in 1968, John immigrated to the United States for graduate school. He received his M.S. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1971 and his Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Princeton in 1976. He went on to earn an MBA from Ohio University in 1979. In his spare time John taught chemical engineering courses as an adjunct professor at Cleveland State University.

John worked for Union Carbide as director of research and raw materials, and subsequently for GrafTech International as senior corporate fellow and consultant. An expert on carbon materials, he traveled extensively — to Japan, South Africa, Europe, China, and Brazil — and was honored as a senior corporate fellow by GrafTech. In 2011, he and his colleagues received an R&D 100 Award for one of his patents. He finished his career as president of CFC Carbon Consulting.

John is survived by his wife, Shun-Tang "Susan" Chang; daughters Connie, Patricia, and Cathleen; and four grandchildren.

#### DANIEL E. BEAUMONT \*91

Dan died Aug. 6, 2025, in Rochester, N.Y.

He was born in Seattle, Jan. 22, 1952. Dan earned a bachelor's degree in 1975 and a master's degree in 1986 from the University of Washington. His interest in Arabic language and studies began when he worked for his father in Libya from 1980 to 1982. His father was hired by the Gaddafi government to operate cloud seeding operations. Dan earned a Ph.D. in Near Eastern studies from Princeton in 1991.

In 1992, Dan joined the faculty of the University of Rochester to teach Arabic language and studies. He remained at Rochester for 33 years. His courses included Arabic, medieval and contemporary studies, European philosophy, and the blues. Dan was the author of two books, *Slave of Desire: Sex, Love, and Death in the 1001 Nights*, and *Preachin' the Blues: The Life and Times of Son House*. At the time of his death, he was working with a Hollywood literary agent on a new novel.

Dan is survived by his daughter, Lily; siblings Cathleen and Peter; and several nieces and nephews.

#### KYUNGWHA PARK \*00

Kyungwha died of lung cancer Aug. 14, 2025, in Blacksburg, Va. She was 55.

She was born Oct. 11, 1969, in Tongyeong, South Korea. In 1991, she graduated with a degree in physics from Korea University, where she went on to earn an MS degree in physics in 1993. Kyungwha received a Ph.D. in physics from Princeton in 2000, after which she held postdoctoral positions at Florida State University and the Naval Research Laboratory.

In 2005, Kyungwha joined the Virginia Tech physics department as an assistant professor and was promoted to full professor in 2019. Her research area was theoretical condensed matter physics, with expertise in the electronic, magnetic, and transport properties of spin-orbit-coupled nanostructures and molecular magnets. She and her research group were funded by the Jeffress Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Energy.

Kyungwha was honored as the Korean American Women in Science and Engineering Outstanding Woman Scientist in 2015. She received a Fulbright fellowship, which she carried out at the Wigner Research Center for Physics in Budapest.

Kyungwha was predeceased by her husband, Youngjai Kiem \*95, in 2002.

*Graduate memorials are prepared by the APGA.*

*Undergraduate memorials appears for James M. Heath '54 \*64 and Olugbemi S. Olutimayin '69 \*72.*

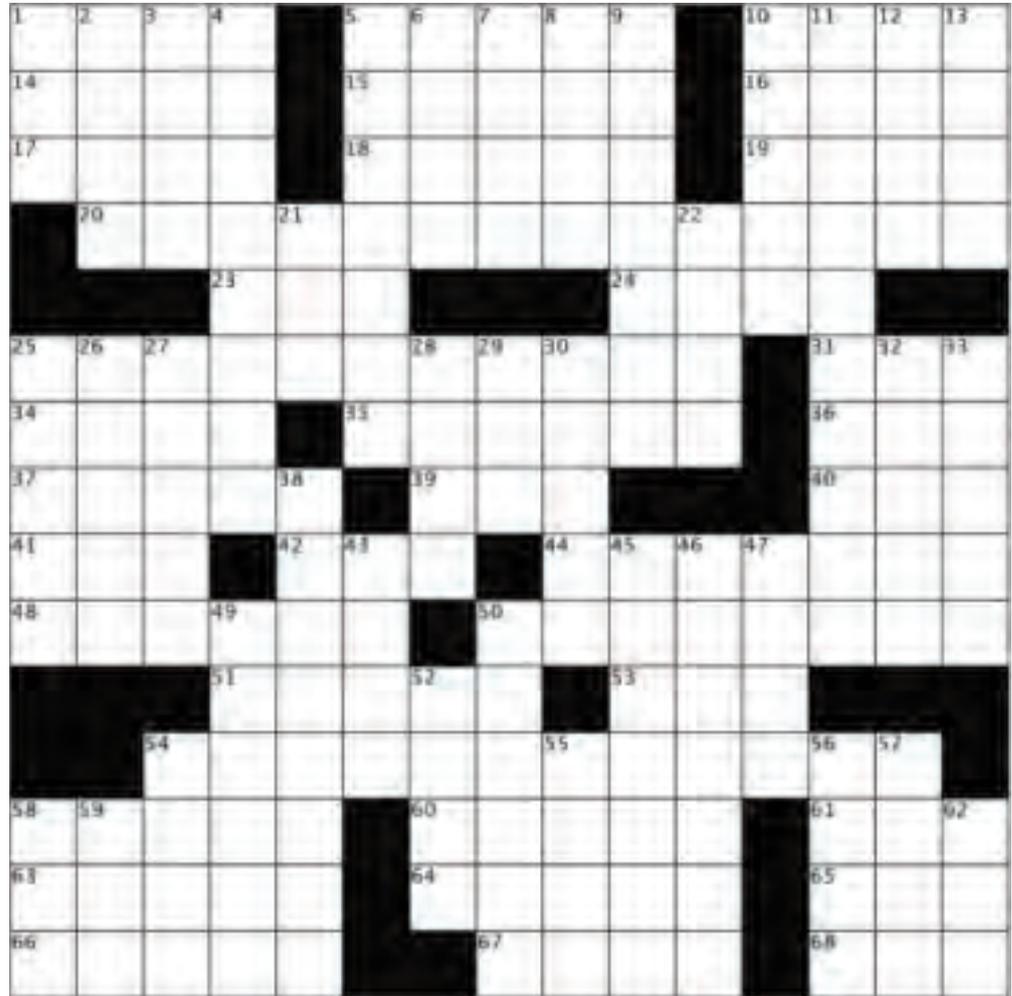


BY STELLA (DAILY) ZAWISTOWSKI '00

# Princeton at the Oscars

## ACROSS

- 1. Graduation day platform
- 5. Highway distress signal
- 10. Cake layer
- 14. Word with “exam” or “history”
- 15. Out of bed
- 16. Prefix meaning “within”
- 17. Magazine with a red-bordered cover
- 18. Got into a poker game
- 19. On the ocean
- 20. 2001 Best Picture film about John Nash \*50
- 23. Image file format
- 24. School near Brown, for short
- 25. 2023 Best Picture film with scenes shot at the Institute for Advanced Study
- 31. One of Santa’s helpers
- 34. Still-life fruit
- 35. Kind of vacuum tube
- 36. “Let’s call \_\_\_ day”
- 37. Lovers’ meeting
- 39. Brooks who made *Spaceballs*
- 40. Maker of ATMs
- 41. 1950s presidential nickname
- 42. Softball pitcher’s stat
- 44. Like some eyeglass lenses
- 48. 1950 title role for which José Ferrer ’33 won Best Actor
- 50. 2018 Oscar-winning documentary co-directed by Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi ’00
- 51. Artists’ materials
- 53. \_\_\_ de mer
- 54. Class of ’32 alum who won Best Actor for *The Philadelphia Story*
- 58. Roaring fire
- 60. Prefix meaning “twenty”
- 61. “Eureka!”
- 63. Wouldn’t stop talking



- 64. Bob of rock
- 65. Is able to
- 66. Actor’s rep
- 67. Type of enclosure: Abbr.
- 68. Terminate

## DOWN

- 1. Part of a URL
- 2. Operatic song
- 3. Poetic foot
- 4. Surprisingly successful movies
- 5. \_\_\_ with peril
- 6. Dryer residue
- 7. Italian wine region
- 8. Marine ecosystem
- 9. Made it through hardship
- 10. Tigers, Bulldogs, and Quakers
- 11. Facts that not all are privy to
- 12. Biblical garden
- 13. Route 1, for one

- 21. Lee who founded the Shakers
- 22. Old Italian coins
- 25. Vision-related
- 26. Full of life
- 27. Check writer
- 28. Humorist Bombeck
- 29. ’80s Apple model
- 30. Back-of-the-mouth tooth
- 32. Rank above major: Abbr.
- 33. 1996 film that won Ethan Coen ’79 a screenwriting Oscar
- 38. Multi-apartment building
- 43. Took a TigerTransit bus
- 45. Arch-foes
- 46. China cups and pots
- 47. Mallorca, por ejemplo
- 49. Company founded by Jeff Bezos ’86
- 50. Symbol of ancient Roman authority
- 52. Sister-wife of Osiris

- 54. Actress Birkin
- 55. *Spartacus* garment
- 56. The Princeton Prize in \_\_\_ Relations
- 57. Word of comparison
- 58. Bali product
- 59. Trail behind
- 62. Princeton’s Program in Values \_\_\_ Public Life

### STUMPED?

Scan the QR code or go online to [paw.princeton.edu](http://paw.princeton.edu) to try an interactive version of the puzzle and reveal answers.



# CLASSIFIED



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**Paris, Tuileries Gardens:** Beautifully-appointed, spacious, 1BR, suitable for two, 6th floor, elevator, concierge. [karin.demorest@gmail.com](mailto:karin.demorest@gmail.com), w\*49.

**PARIS, ILE SAINT-LOUIS:** Elegant, spacious top floor skylighted apartment, gorgeous view overlooking Seine, 2 bedrooms sleep 4, 2 baths, elevator, well-appointed, full kitchen, Wi-Fi. (678) 232-8444 or [triff@mindspring.com](mailto:triff@mindspring.com).

**Summer in Provence:** Charming farmhouse, four bedrooms, swimming pool & olive groves, near St Remy, Avignon, Arles. WiFi & A/C. [www.masdechause.com](http://www.masdechause.com) and [fleur\\_macdonald@hotmail.com](mailto:fleur_macdonald@hotmail.com)

**Italy/Todi:** Luxurious 8BR, 7.5BA villa, amazing views, infinity pool, olives, lavender, grapes, vegetable garden, housekeeper included, cook available, A/C, Wi-Fi. Discount for Princetonians. Photos/prices/availability: [www.luxuryvillatodi.com](http://www.luxuryvillatodi.com), p'11.

### UNITED STATES, NORTHEAST

**Wellfleet:** 4 bedroom beachfront cottage with spectacular views overlooking Cape Cod National Seashore. 610-745-5873 or [Warren.Thaler@icloud.com](mailto:Warren.Thaler@icloud.com) '84

**Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.** Jewel box of an owner-occupied apartment located directly across from the US Supreme Court. Perfect for summer interns. Walk to stores, restaurants. Junior one bedroom fully furnished all utilities included. Available for three months from 6/1-8/31. Email [laurelbharvey55@gmail.com](mailto:laurelbharvey55@gmail.com) P'06.

### UNITED STATES, SOUTHEAST

**Atlanta GA:** classy two-bedroom, 2.5 bath duplex with all amenities in hip Reynoldstown. Available June and July for World Cup enthusiasts or others. Daniel Serwer, PhD '77, [danielserwer@gmail.com](mailto:danielserwer@gmail.com) or 202-361-6393.

### UNITED STATES, WEST

**Kolea** - 2 and 3 bedroom beachfront vacation rentals at Waikoloa Beach Resort on the Big Island of Hawaii. <https://www.waikoloavacationrentals.com/kolea-rentals/>

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## For Sale

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**KURT WEITZMANN (1904-1993)**

# He Fled Nazi Germany and Shaped the Course of Art History

BY HARRISON BLACKMAN '17

**W**HEN KURT WEITZMANN arrived in Princeton in 1935, the German art historian took meals at the Graduate College, where he was flummoxed by having to wear academic gowns for the first time in his career. “Sitting at the long tables, the American students, curious to learn about Nazi Germany, beleaguered me with questions,” Weitzmann recalled in his posthumously published 1994 memoir, *Sailing with Byzantium*. Though he was not Jewish, his mentor was, and in solidarity he had refused to join the Nazi Party, then a requirement to teach at German universities, leading to his flight from his homeland.

A longtime professor in art and archaeology and fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Weitzmann remained in Princeton for the rest of his life and ended up shaping the field of art history in America, training many of the discipline’s most important figures.

Born in 1904 in a village near Kassel, a city in central Germany, Weitzmann became interested in antiquities at a young age after visiting a local

museum, and studied art history against his parents’ wishes. He pursued his Ph.D. in Berlin under the tutelage of venerated scholar Adolph Goldschmidt, whose role in German academia was increasingly complicated by his Jewish heritage. Weitzmann’s association with Goldschmidt also put him under intense scrutiny. Surprisingly, it was his research that got him — and his wife Josepha Fiedler, another mentee of Goldschmidt — out of Germany.

In 1932, Yale archaeologists uncovered the synagogue of Dura-Europos in Syria. Built in the third century, it was one of the oldest synagogues ever discovered and featured striking frescos of Old Testament scenes. Weitzmann theorized that the Octateuch manuscripts, an early iteration of the Christian Old Testament held in the Vatican’s collections, might be related to the imagery depicted in the synagogue. The only problem? After Weitzmann wrote to the Vatican requesting to view these manuscripts, it turned out that Princeton professor Charles Rufus Morey had already requested photographs for a similar project.

As it happened, Morey was happy to let Weitzmann work on the manuscripts, on the condition that Weitzmann came to Princeton in an official capacity. In 1935, Weitzmann joined the Institute for Advanced Study as a fellow, and his wife followed him to Princeton three years later.

Weitzmann’s biggest contribution to Princeton was inspiring a generation of students. After Morey’s 1945 retirement, Weitzmann was hired to run the elite manuscript seminar in the Department of Art and Archaeology, where he taught a number of leading medieval art historians, including future directors of museums in Palo Alto, Cleveland, and Baltimore.

**Perhaps his impact was due to his hands-on approach.** When Weitzmann taught his precepts, he typically brought an object from the Princeton University Art Museum to pass around and allow students to examine up close. “I remember once I had a little Romanesque ivory Madonna,” Weitzmann said in a 1984 interview with the *Rutgers Art Review*, adding that the student “who looked at the piece with the greatest interest was Tom Hoving.” In 1967, Thomas Hoving ’53 \*60 became the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, having been the driving force for the museum’s 1968 acquisition of the ancient Egyptian Temple of Dendur. According to the *Rutgers Art Review* interview, once Weitzmann retired in 1972, Hoving decided to “make use of the retired professor,” and together they collaborated on a 1977 Met exhibition tracing the history of late Roman art.

In January 1993, Princeton informed Weitzmann he would receive an honorary doctorate at Commencement. “All spring he looked forward to this public recognition by the institution to which he had devoted his life,” wrote Weitzmann’s former student, Herbert Kessler \*65. But Weitzmann fell ill, and the honor could not wait for the graduation ceremony. Just before Weitzmann’s death, President Harold Shapiro \*64 conferred the degree at the scholar’s bedside, in the company of his wife and former students. **P**

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